EPTEMBER 12, 2005

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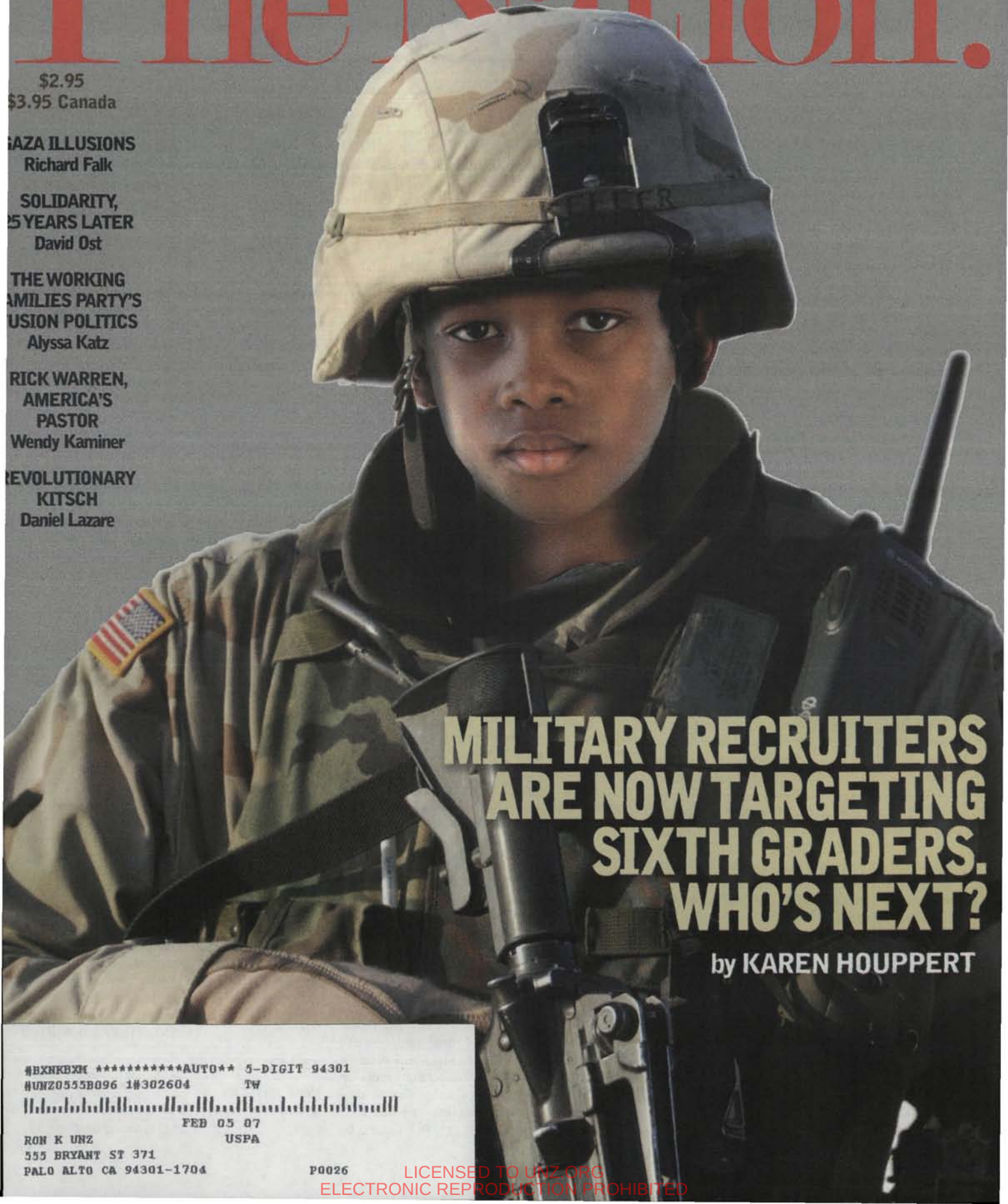

MILITARY RECRUITERS ARE NOW TARGETING SIXTH GRADERS. WHO'S NEXT?

by KAREN HOUPPERT

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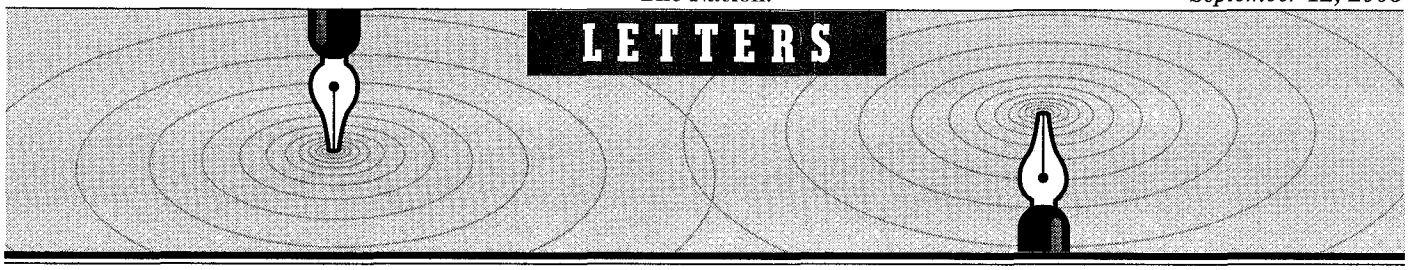

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

BAREFOOT & PREGNANT

Redding, Conn.

■ Regarding Ayelish McGarvey's July 18/25 "Plan B for Plan B": There *is* precedent for the FDA switching a prescription drug to an over-the-counter one but with age, and even location, restrictions. In the mid-1990s, it approved Nicorette and NicoDerm smoking-cessation products for use without a prescription only for smokers over 18. (Presumably, if you were 18 or under you still needed a doctor's prescription.) In addition, the FDA said the products could be sold only in retail locations where there was a pharmacist—therefore not in convenience stores, the number-one outlet for cigarettes. Certainly reinforces the political aspect of a "scientific" decision. JAMES BARICKMAN

Skidaway Island, Ga.

■ Congratulations on facilitating the resignation of David Hager from the advisory panel of the FDA. This evangelical physician has done harm to the cause of women's health, as pointed out in your May 30 and July 18/25 issues. The American College of Ob/Gyns and other groups tried, but you got it done!

STEVE GORDON, MD

THE PANDEMIC LOOMS

Stony Brook, NY

■ Mike Davis's July 18/25 "Avian Flu: A State of Unreadiness" rightly focuses attention on the emerging danger of an avian flu pandemic. One challenge that he could have emphasized more, however, is the difficulty that scientists have in monitoring flu dynamics within Southeast Asia because of the manner in which samples are analyzed. The international research community has emphasized the processing and analysis of samples at labs in Europe, Japan and the United States, rather than within the countries most affected by avian flu. Little effort has been made to develop scientific capacity within these countries, with the result that analyses are delayed and questions can arise because of contamination and confusion during international shipping.

As Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Unit at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City, says in a recent issue of the journal *Nature*, "The international community continues to suggest that countries ship samples out somewhere else, while doing absolutely nothing to invest in enhancing the scientific capacity of the Vietnamese to respond to the epidemics themselves." Such investment is essential both for more accurate analyses and more rapid responses. The US and international health communities should press for more support to develop capacity in these countries. A key in addressing infectious disease threats is rapid response to the correct problem in the right location. Improved scientific and medical capacity within the countries most affected will help give us that key. MANUEL LERDAU

Professor, ecology and evolution, SUNY

Washington, DC

■ Mike Davis characterizes the work of Trust for America's Health (TFAH) as "glibly" perpetuating a "bioterrorism myth." While we laud Davis for his attempt to capture the seriousness of the threat of a pandemic flu outbreak, we take issue with *his* glibness in pitting aspects of infectious disease prevention against one another.

We believe he missed two major points in our recent report on public-health emergency preparedness. First, we provided data that demonstrated that post-9/11 federal bioterrorism preparedness funds have resulted in some significant improvements in the public-health system's abilities to respond to both bio-threats and more traditional health concerns. The country still has a long way to go toward being fully prepared, but we have made some important first steps.

Second, TFAH has consistently recommended viewing bioterrorism preparedness in the context of an "all hazards" approach to improving readiness for any potential public-health emergency. In fact, we have highlighted the threat posed by a potential pandemic flu outbreak as an example of the need to "focus on the fundamentals."

We don't know whether the next major US health emergency will be instigated by Mother Nature or by a bioterrorist. We do know that we will all be better off if we make improving overall public-health preparedness a national priority. MICHAEL EARLS AND LAURA SEGAL

Trust for America's Health

DAVIS REPLIES

San Diego

■ Dr. Lerdau's point is all-important: Vietnam is currently the front line in the battle against avian influenza, but containment efforts are faltering because of the refusal of rich countries to provide relatively trivial amounts of financial assistance to Hanoi. Earls and Segal, for their part, correctly stress TFAH's admirable efforts to alert Congress and the public to the dire condition of our public-health system. Indeed, *Nation* readers will want to consult the Trust's recent sobering report on the continuing lack of preparedness to deal with an avian flu pandemic (see "A Killer Flu" at www.healthyamericans.org). But I stand by my charge that TFAH has been both glib and opportunistic in endorsing the Bush Administration's self-serving contention that we live in "The Age of Bioterrorism"—the subtitle of one of TFAH's reports. Public-health priorities are not served by hitchhiking a ride with Washington's spurious "war on terror."

MIKE DAVIS

JEFFERSON'S LEGACY ON RACE

New York City

■ Daniel Lazare's review of Christopher Hitchens's *Thomas Jefferson: Author of America* ["The Heritage Foundation," June 13] refers to the third President as having passed on his "conservatism, his agrarianism and his racism" to the nation as a whole, as if Jefferson were primarily responsible for America's adherence to white supremacy. Whatever one can say about the first two traits, it is just wrong to describe Jefferson as having passed on something that was endemic in American society before he was even a gleam in his father's eye. There was no passing to be done. It was always there. In fact, Jefferson lived what his society bequeathed to him; and he, like the overwhelming majority of his cohort in the North and South, was unable (unwilling) to totally rise above that bequest.

It is highly probable that over the years the vast majority of Americans have known Jefferson through the language of the Declaration of Independence, not his far less widely circulated views on race, which have occupied scholars since the last half of the twentieth century. Indeed it was, in part, the language about the equal humanity of mankind that made Jefferson, rightly or wrongly, a suspect character during his life, and an ambiguous figure in areas of the South outside his native Virginia many years after his death.

Ironically, whatever Jefferson felt privately, his more well-known words—and the promise contained in the Declaration—have been used by blacks as effectively as any other piece of writing in American history. Though probably not intended, the recent trend toward presenting Jefferson's racism as if it were some anomaly in American public life totally misapprehends the pervasiveness of white supremacy in this country and lets far too many people off the hook. No one person brought that into being, and no one person could have ended it.

ANNETTE GORDON-REED

LAZARE REPLIES

New York City

■ Annette Gordon-Reed makes the elementary

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PRINTED AUGUST 24 VOLUME 281, NUMBER 7

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Cover photo-illustration by Gene Case & Stephen Kling/Avenging Angels; illustrations by Christoph Niemann and Tim Robinson

EDITORIALS

Lessons of Camp Casey

As August fades into September, George W. Bush faces a political landscape radically altered from when he departed for Crawford. A major reason is Cindy Sheehan's Camp Casey. Bush fundamentally misread the clarity and dignity of Sheehan's demand for a meeting with him to ask why her son died in Iraq, and instead offered the nation an image of the Commander in Chief going on bicycle rides. Bush's robotic repetition of one of his favorite catch-phrases—"As Iraqis stand up, we will stand down"—rang hollow as the body count of US troops exceeded 1,800 and polls showed nearly two-thirds of Americans disillusioned with his conduct of the war. Meanwhile in Iraq, claims that continued US occupation is vital in order to foster democracy and stability were mocked by a constitutional process that appeared more likely to lead to the imposition of Islamic law and to conditions ripe for civil war.

In late August, in what seemed to be a direct response to the Sheehan protest, Bush interrupted his five-week vacation to give a speech in Salt Lake City that offered his newest rationalization for the war—that we "owe" it to the dead to stay in Iraq. But that circular reasoning fell as flat as the rationalizations before it. "It pains me to hear that more people should die because those people have died," Celeste Zappala, mother of another American soldier killed in Iraq, told the *New York Times*. "That makes no sense. We can honor them by having an intelligent, honest policy."

As Congress prepares to return to Washington, key Democrats—including presidential aspirants Kerry, Clinton and Biden—continue to sidestep the Iraq dilemma. Instead of calling for an exit plan, leading Democrats talk about adding more troops in order to "win." This stance puts them in an implicit alliance with the neocons, who blame insufficient commitment, rather than the occupation itself, for the collapsed policy.

Instead, Democrats should be following the example of those on both sides of the aisle who are calling for withdrawal. A House resolution known as the Homeward Bound Act, which was introduced by four Representatives, including Republican Walter Jones and Democrat Neil Abercrombie, and which already has fifty cosponsors, would require Bush to put together a plan by the end of this year for bringing all US forces home from Iraq, beginning no later than October 1, 2006. Russell Feingold recently became the first senator to call for withdrawal by a specific date: the end of 2006. His rationale—that this would remove a key reason for the continuing violence—was echoed by GOP Senator Chuck Hagel, who told ABC's *This Week*, "We should start figuring out how we get out of there.... I think our involvement there has destabilized the Middle East. And the longer we're there, I think, the further destabilization will occur."

As part of an effort to find a way out of Iraq, Representative Lynn Woolsey is organizing an unofficial Congressional hearing on September 15 (modeled on the one organized by Representative John Conyers about the Downing Street memos). At that hearing, academics, military personnel and other experts will discuss strategies for Washington to achieve military disengagement from Iraq while still playing a constructive role in the rebuilding of Iraqi society. Also in September, leading peace groups will present a petition to Congress that lays out an exit strategy. This is the time for activists, who are preparing a Washington march on September 24, to reach out beyond their own ranks to welcome families and soldiers who may have initially supported the war out of loyalty or idealism, but who now feel betrayed.

There is no possible strategy to "win" in Iraq, only the urgent necessity of a road map out. As Representative Woolsey wrote of her hearing plans: "Everything about this war has been a ruinous debacle...there is only one solution: Bring the troops home."

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COMMENT

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2005 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. or DPGM, 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, ON N9A 6J3. **When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues $4 prepaid ($6 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

INTERNET: Selections from the current issue become available Thursday night at www.thenation.com.

Gaza Illusions

It is a remarkable feat of illusionary politics to present the 8,000 or so illegal Israeli settlers of Gaza as "victims" during the recent process of disengagement. Mainly lost in the media shuffle was the fact that Israel defied United Nations Security Council decisions and world opinion by establishing settlements in occupied Palestinian territory after the 1967 war. The establishment of such settlements for the civilian population of an occupying power is clearly prohibited by international law as set forth in Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In addition to the illegality, it was a bizarre idea to impose an Israeli civilian presence on the already crowded Gaza Strip, which has long been one of the most densely populated places on earth. The twenty-five-mile strip now contains 1.3 million Palestinians, well more than half living in miserable refugee camps, with some estimates running as high as 85 percent. It was extremely costly for Israel to protect the twenty-one settlements in Gaza, it was unpopular with most Israelis, it was a demoralizing duty for the Israel Defense Forces and it was a constant source of grisly photos exhibiting the daily cruelties of the occupation.

Despite the moving TV scenes of Jews being forcibly evacuated by Jewish soldiers, Israel's motives all along were essentially cynical: using expendable settlements, and now disengagement, to create a bargaining chip intended to solidify Israel's hold on the West Bank. The Gaza settlers were indeed dupes of the larger Israeli vision of occupation, at least to the extent that they were led by the government to believe that the settlements would never be relinquished. Ariel Sharon fed such expectations a few years back when he proclaimed that the isolated and embattled settlement of Netzarim was as integral to the Israeli state as was Tel Aviv itself. But this weak form of victimization (remember that the settlers are being generously compensated and evicted with a maximum reliance on persuasion, compassion and tact) must be contrasted with the super-strong victimization of the Palestinians over the course of decades (including mass expulsions by force; repeated house demolitions without compensation or alternate housing; years of unpunished and provocative settler violence against Palestinian civilians; and an array of hardships arising from IDF protection of these long-beleaguered settlements).

Whether this is truly "disengagement" can also be questioned: Israel will retain complete control of Gaza's borders, as well as of its entire airspace and coastal waters. In crucial respects, the prisonlike character of Gaza will reflect a shift in the security arrangements inside the region, nothing more. Henceforth, the supervision of the Palestinian prison in Gaza will be the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority, with the prison walls and guard towers under the jurisdiction of the Israelis, who may also retain control of a security strip in the south separating Gaza from Egypt. And Gaza is to be permanently demilitarized and without weaponry, except light arms in the hands of authorized Palestinian security forces. Israel

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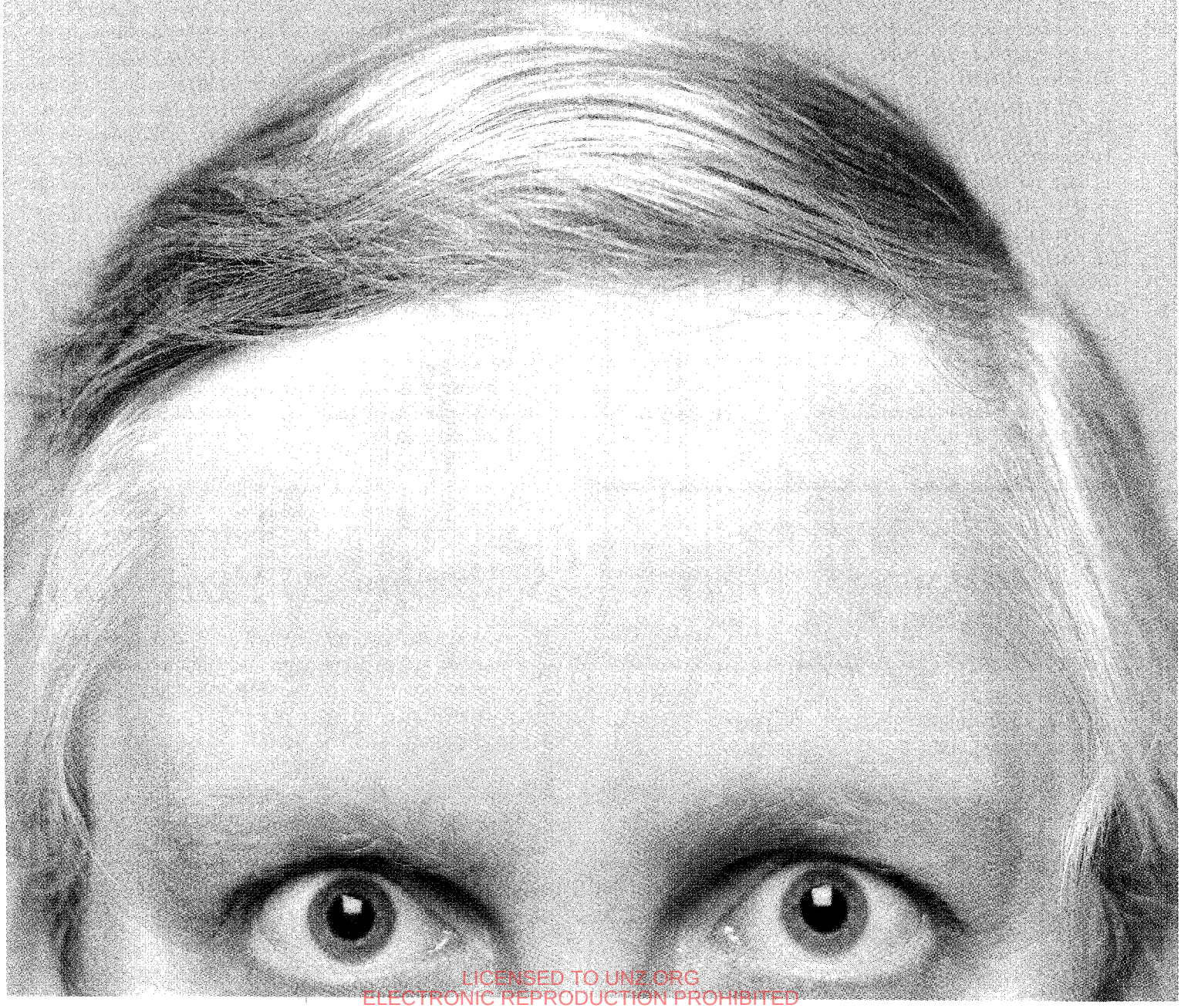

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COMMENT

claims a continuing right to use force within Gaza either preventively or reactively at any time and place of its choosing. Under these conditions neither international law nor common sense would treat the Gaza disengagement as the end of Israeli occupation. It is a shift to a less oppressive form of occupation, allowing greater Palestinian mobility, eliminating internal checkpoints and easing the ordeal of daily life in the impoverished circumstances of the Gazans, but in the end Israel retains control.

Worse than all this, and more consequential for the future, is the deal that Israel has struck to proceed with its Gaza plan. This was not a result of negotiations with the Palestinians but a bargain struck over their heads, with Washington. The initiative was shaped unilaterally by the Israelis, for their own purposes. From its outset the Gaza disengagement was a gigantic exercise in diversionary politics: It removed the critical international gaze from the illegal Israeli separation wall in the West Bank, which is designed to join the bulk of the settler population irreversibly to pre-1967 Israel while imposing major new hardships on tens of thousands of Palestinians. At the same time, Israel brazenly continues with the expansion of West Bank/East Jerusalem settlements and their populations, already now numbering about 400,000.

More than this, George W. Bush wrote a letter to Sharon on April 14, 2004, approving Israeli retention of West Bank settlement blocs while praising Sharon's courage, giving Israel a huge political victory. It represents a fundamental scaling back of what the Palestinians can reasonably expect from an eventual peace agreement, and even makes it appear unrealistic to demand the removal of these settlements as integral to the success of a revived bilateral peace process. It stretches reason to the breaking point to argue that the removal of a small number of illegal and dysfunctional settlements will provide the political foundation for the normalization of several hundred West Bank settlements. That this was allowed to happen also displays both the weakness of Palestinian diplomacy and the one-sidedness of the American approach. In addition, Israel is treated by much of the world's media as having regained the moral and peace initiative by these much-publicized Gaza moves, perversely putting pressure on the Palestinians to make a concession to the Israelis in response.

The settler resistance to the Gaza disengagement was intended to inhibit any future plan to dislodge settlers from the main West Bank settlements. The settler movement undoubtedly wanted to drive home the point by creating a spectacle of resistance in Gaza of such magnitude that any Israeli leader who attempted a future disengagement on a bigger scale would be finished, at least politically, if not physically. In this sense the Gaza disengagement appears inseparable from de facto annexation of a significant portion of the West Bank and the end, not the beginning, of the Palestinian dream of a viable sovereign state. If this occurs Palestinians will be pushed even further toward Hamas. As Marwan Bishara suggests (see "Disengagement From Peace?" www.thenation.com), such a development is sure to ignite a third intifada, which will exhibit total Palestinian disillusionment with the phony allures of a "peace process" and the "road map." It is deeply ironic that Israeli religious extremists are unwittingly strengthening extremist elements on the Palestinian side, and vice versa. An overly attentive world media helps to further inflame young minds on both sides, muting moderate voices.

For all this, the Gaza disengagement can still be welcomed, even celebrated, for the temporary and partial relief that it brings to the long-tormented Gazan population. But more fully considered, this disengagement represents a dangerous step backward in the struggle to find a just peace for these two peoples based on sovereign equality, respect for international law and fair solutions to the status of Jerusalem and the claims of Palestinian refugees. The sooner these core issues are addressed, the better the prospects for avoiding new cycles of violence, extremism and despair, especially on the Palestinian side. Sadly, the Gaza disengagement makes such clarity even less likely than it was during the dismal decades of Israeli settlement and brutal administrative control.

RICHARD FALK

Richard Falk has been a visiting professor of global studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, since 2002.

CALVIN TRILLIN

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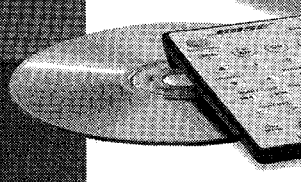

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COMMENT

For although Solidarity fought against the official Communist world, the left welcomed it more than the right. While bankers feared the movement might jeopardize the repayment of Poland's large debts, and conservatives feared mass democratic movements in general, radical activists from Brazil to South Africa sent their greetings and their representatives, trying to figure out what this unusual trade union/social movement, led by 37-year-old electrician Lech Walesa, was all about.

As demonstrated over the next sixteen months, Solidarity's real innovation was its commitment to radical social transformation without bothering about the state. Partly because party dictatorship put the state off-limits and partly because Solidarity's key ideologues had themselves been 1960s radicals inspired by the anti-authority ethos of the time, Solidarity developed the groundbreaking concept of "antipolitics." The idea was not to "take" power but to get away from power and let society transform itself.

August 1980 set in motion an emancipatory carnival of civic participation. Workers (including intellectuals, for everyone was a wage worker under state socialism) formed trade unions and published uncensored company newsletters. They took local matters into their own hands and improved their working conditions. Students built their own organizations and revamped school curriculums. All over the country people attended meetings, read newspapers and talked with one another with that rare sense that they mattered. To use a favorite Solidarity term, for a moment regular people were the "subjects" of politics, not its objects.

Within a few short months nearly 10 million people—more than a quarter of Poland's population—had joined Solidarity. Yet even with such numbers, it practiced a day-to-day democracy unrivaled in mass movements elsewhere. Meetings went on until everyone had his or her say. Leaders at all levels were elected. Independent journalists were allowed to sit in on meetings of the top leadership bodies and publish their accounts, so everyone could know what the leaders were thinking and doing.

Solidarity would not abandon its democratic commitment even in the face of threats to its existence. I remember a conference of Warsaw delegates in December 1981 where local president Zbigniew Bujak told the gathering that if it came to a confrontation with the government, he would call another meeting so delegates could share their views on how to respond. One week later the government outlawed the union, declared martial law and arrested most of those same delegates.

To an American left mired in late-1970s doldrums caused by the demise of the antiwar movement and disillusionment with Third World revolutions (witness Pol Pot's Cambodia), Solidarity was a revelation and an inspiration. Perhaps workers should not be written off as a force for change. Perhaps radical, nonviolent democratic movements could get broad-based support. Some balked at the hearty Catholicism of Polish workers, but hadn't the civil rights movement also had religion as one of its sources? And Solidarity's belief that things don't change because of new leaders, that only changed people can change the world—wasn't this central to New Left notions of radicalism too?

With its unremitting belief in independent initiatives, its extraordinary labor–intellectual alliance, its revolutionary passion yet remarkable self-restraint, Solidarity was the original purveyor of a "third way." Its program advocated neither capitalism nor socialism but a "self-managed republic," understood essentially as a permanently open democracy. Civic participation was not a means to an end but an end in itself.

If such ideas have become more popular among the left since 1980, that is in large part due to Solidarity. For it was Solidarity that reintroduced the concept of civil society to the West, bringing to it a radical participatory vision far different from the watered-down notion of the voluntary sector that it often implies today.

Things did not quite work out as hoped. One of Solidarity's great strengths had been its freedom from illusions, its unwillingness to trust any leader or ideology promising a quick fix. Yet after 1989 it succumbed to illusions about the "free market" and was not interested in building strong trade unions to counteract that. (The West bears responsibility for this too, having elected in the 1980s the conservative governments Poland would have to work with.)

So Solidarity didn't live up to its promise. It's hardly the first social movement that's failed to do so. But today is the occasion to celebrate not 1989 but 1980—that remarkable "in between" moment when people started living their lives as if the dictatorship simply did not exist. They were forced to come up with new ideas and exciting practices, and these are what deserve to be remembered and recovered today.

Unfortunately, few are interested in doing so. Western progressives don't seem to care, because Poland eventually became a "regular" country, with a pro-American foreign policy to boot. Most Poles no longer care because they're *glad* Poland became a "regular" country. But that sixteen-month explosion of civic participation and political innovation between August 1980 and December 1981 still contains secrets and gems about the alternative political universes that are possible. Let's hope we recover them before another twenty-five years have passed.

DAVID OST

David Ost (ost@hws.edu) is the author of many works on Eastern Europe, including Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics *and his new book,* The Defeat of Solidarity.

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

The tears of departing settlers have evaporated in the dust of Gaza, and there is a sense among ordinary Israelis that there threatens to be an outbreak of sanity in Israel, writes Hillel Schenker from Tel Aviv. Settlers and their rabbinical patrons are stunned to discover that God, in fact, is not on their side. As oil-hungry China gobbles up PetroKazakhstan, Nicholas von Hoffman deconstructs the Unocal deal, a rare case in corporate America in which jingoism trumped the profit motive. And Ari Berman examines the growing rifts among liberals, cautioning Democrats to stop acting like losers (www.thenation.com).

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Excerpts from Cato Institute Analysis*:

"The government is waging an aggressive, intemperate, unjustified war on pain doctors."

"By demonizing physicians as drug dealers and exaggerating the health risk of pain management, the federal government has made physicians scapegoats for the failed drug war. Even worse, the Drug Enforcement Administration's renewed war on pain doctors has frightened many physicians out of pain management altogether, exacerbating an already serious health crisis - the widespread undertreatment of intractable pain."

"Experts agree that tens of millions of Americans suffer from undertreated or untreated pain... According to one 1999 survey, just one in four pain patients received treatment adequate to alleviate suffering."

"The medical evidence overwhelmingly indicates that when administered properly, opioid therapy rarely, if ever, results in 'accidental addiction' or opioid abuse."

"Pain specialists make an important distinction between patients who depend on opiates to function normally – to get out of bed, tend to household chores, and hold down jobs – and addicts who take drugs for euphoria, and whose lifestyles deteriorate as a result of taking opiates, instead of improving. The DEA makes no such distinction."

"The relationship between a doctor and his patient is crucial to the proper assessment and treatment of the patient's condition. The DEA's aggressive investigative procedure poisons the doctor-patient relationship from both sides."

"The DEA continues to lower its evidentiary standards, making it nearly impossible for many doctors to determine what is and isn't permitted."

"Large quantities of narcotics routinely go missing en route from manufacturers to wholesalers and from wholesalers to retailers. The DEA itself acknowledges this problem. Given the poor job the DEA is doing of monitoring the narcotics it's charged with overseeing... DEA's attempt to blame physicians for the drugs' street availability seems arbitrary, unjustified, and capricious."

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
H. Michael Gray, Chair; Robert E. Field, Co-Chair

* "Treating Doctors as Drug Dealers: The DEA's War on Prescription Painkillers" by Professor Ronald T. Libby, June 16, 2005. http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa545.pdf

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In Fact . . .

IRAQ RECKONING

■ Dilip Hiro writes: When a war ends with a clear-cut result, the victorious side makes an estimate of the damage it has done to the military infrastructure of the defeated nation—as well as its economic infrastructure. There is no reason to believe that the Pentagon failed to follow this procedure after the Iraq War. Yet little effort has been made so far by journalists or lawmakers to obtain this crucial statistic. Meanwhile, for an intelligent guess, one should examine the available figures for the 1991 Gulf War, consisting of a thirty-nine-day air campaign followed by a brief ground campaign. The US-led coalition mounted 106,000 air sorties, dropping 141,000 tons of explosives, and fired 315 cruise missiles. According to Sadoun Hamadi, deputy prime minister of Iraq, the damage to the country's infrastructure during the first twenty-six days of the war was $200 billion. Later, the Arab Monetary Fund estimated Iraq's aggregate losses at $190 billion. Allowing for an exaggeration by Hamadi, let us put the total damage to the Iraqi infrastructure during the forty-two-day war at $200 billion. During the first four weeks of the Iraq War, the Pentagon mounted 37,000 air sorties, launched 23,000 precision-guided missiles, fired 750 cruise missiles and dropped 1,566 cluster bombs. To the resulting damage must be added the losses caused by the relentless looting and arson that the victorious Anglo-American troops allowed to go unchecked in Baghdad and elsewhere. My conservative estimate of the damage done to Iraq's civilian and military infrastructures is $100 billion—more than five times the $18.4 billion Congress allocated for Iraq's reconstruction.

JEWELL HANDY GRESHAM

■ Our friend Jewell Handy Gresham died in August, aged 82. A brilliant, strong-willed woman, with a salving sweetness and sense of humor, in 1989 she came to us, typically, with a challenge: *The Nation* must carry on the values of its Abolitionist founders by publishing a special edition she had conceived to counter the pathological images of the black family featured in the national media. It was to be written and edited by black women and produced by *Nation* editors. After a contentious gestation (in which the disputes had to do with space—or lack of it—rather than race), "Scapegoating the Black Family: Black Women Speak" (July 24/31, 1989) appeared. It was nominated for a National Magazine Award and became one of our bestselling issues. Until her retirement in 1987, Jewell had pursued an active academic career. She was married to Robert Nemiroff, former husband of, and producer for, playwright Lorraine Hansberry. After Nemiroff's death in 1991, Jewell served as executor of Hansberry's estate and was active in the successful 2004 revival of *A Raisin in the Sun* on Broadway.

JOHN JOHNSON

■ Pamela Newkirk writes: John Johnson, the founding publisher of *Ebony*, who died recently, helped disassemble the negative image of African-Americans firmly embedded in popular culture. Today, portrayals of African-Americans as doctors, lawyers and other positive contributors to society are viewed as normal, but until 1945, when Johnson founded *Ebony*, such depictions were virtually nonexistent in the media. Over the past few decades *Ebony* and *Jet* have been criticized for their apolitical emphasis on middle-class aspiration, but in pre–civil rights America they provided compelling evidence of African-American achievement that challenged the myth of black inferiority and dysfunction. For African-Americans living lives of dignity and purpose, the publications served as invaluable and validating mirrors. They celebrated those like Johnson, the grandson of slaves, who managed to overcome racism, segregation, poverty and self-doubt spawned by decades of oppression and demeaning stereotypes. Though Johnson's magazines were not passionately political, their contribution to racial equality was revolutionary.

MINORITY/MAJORITY

■ **Permanent Minority.** At a critical juncture in mid-August, Senate Democrats told the *Washington Post* that they "will not launch a major fight to block the Supreme Court nomination of John G. Roberts Jr." The front-page story quoted "more than a dozen Democratic senators and aides" who remained unnamed but who deflated serious efforts to expose Roberts's extreme right-wing agenda.

■ **Toward the Majority.** Twenty unions and grassroots organizations came together to protest the votes cast by New York Democratic Representatives Greg Meeks and Ed Towns in favor of corporate-written legislation like the Central America Free Trade Agreement. At a high-profile press conference, the group released a letter to House minority leader Nancy Pelosi demanding that Meeks and Towns be removed from their committee positions. The pressure sends a message to Democrats that there are consequences for selling out. —David Sirota

NO. 3000 AND COUNTING

■ We seem to have a milestone on our hands. Turn to our last page and you'll see at the top the words PUZZLE NO. 3000. Actually, it's not puzzle-setter Frank W. Lewis's 3,000th puzzle. He took over in the issue of October 18, 1947, with PUZZLE NO. 233. So this week's is only his 2,767th consecutive puzzle. Frank turns 93 on August 25. H _ _ _ _ B _ _ _ _ _ _ _, Frank.

EDITORS, NOTE!

■ Greg Mitchell, editor of the newspaper trade publication *Editor & Publisher,* threw down a challenge to his subscribers: "It's time for newspapers, many of which helped get us into this war, to consider using their editorial pages as platforms to help get us out of it. So far, few have done much more than wring their hands, or simply criticize the conduct of the war, or the lack of body armor." Stop playing it safe, Mitchell says, and "clearly call for a phased withdrawal" from Iraq.

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COMIX NATION

In honor of Soldier No. 1776 to lose a life in Iraq The Bush Administration proudly announces

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HC HALLIBURTON CORP
YOUR NAME HERE!
Is Entitled to $1776 Worth of Stock

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FUN CONTEST!!!

It's been hard work coming up with reasons for the War in Iraq! Every time we come up with a good one, someone disproves it! So we're announcing a contest to come up with 1776 more reasons for our presence in Iraq to show that Soldier No. 1776 didn't die in vain. The 1776 winning entrants will receive $1776 off the purchase price of their next Hummer!

REASONS
1 WMDs
2 Involvement in 9/11
3 They tried to hurt my Daddy
1776 Your reason here!

*With Promotion Code NR-1776

TOMBSTONE!

1776
HERE LIES SOLDIER No. 1776 TO MAKE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN IRAQ

The patriotic family of Soldier No. 1776 will soon receive this one-of-a-kind tombstone!

AMNESTY!!!

By spreading democracy to Iraq, the US is exporting the values that have drawn millions of immigrants to our shores. But many are here illegally! So in honor of Soldier No. 1776 we are offering full amnesty & a Green Card to the first 1776 illegal aliens who enlist for a 5-year commitment & deployment to Iraq (or a future war of our choosing). Those who make the Ultimate Sacrifice will be granted IPC (Instant Posthumous Citizenship).

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YOUR THUMB PRINT

Certificate of Citizenship
YOUR NAME HERE!
Is a Citizen of the USA

*With Promotion Code IA-1776

SPECIAL OFFER!!!

Ever notice how confusing place names in Iraq are to pronounce? Imagine not being able to say the name of the city where your loved one is deployed – or makes the Ultimate Sacrifice! For the next 1776 men & women who enlist, we will re-name a town in Iraq in their honor!

YOUR NAME HERE!
YOUR NAME HERE!
IRAQ
YOUR NAME HERE!

Thomas McKean

*With Promotion Code NN-1776

Only One Promotion Per Entrant! Coming Soon: Soldier No. 1776 in Afghanistan!!

Thomas McKean is a writer and illustrator whose latest book is Into the Candlelit Room, *a short story collection for young adults.*

Thomas McKean

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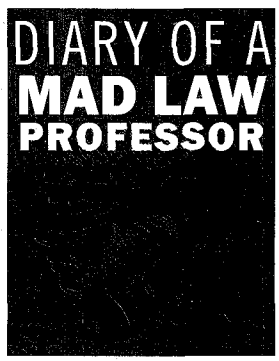
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Midsummer Night's Dream



Last days of summer, hot, humid. I toss and turn as nightmarish sprites dance through the wee hours. I hallucinate: Baseball suspended whilst Fenway Park taken over by still-Rolling Stones. Arnold Schwarzenegger stages political fundraiser in stadium full of moss-free but confused Red Sox fans. Score tied in cliffhanger twixt Frat Boy and The Caliphate. In what is surely my imagination, Pat Robertson issues a fatwa from the televised pulpit of *The 700 Club* calling for Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez to be assassinated. British Home Secretary Charles Clarke says he "will be publishing and then acting upon new ways of dealing with preachers of intolerance and hatred." New York's Mayor Bloomberg cancels permit for street party at which twenty artists planned to paint graffiti on metal surfaces resembling subway cars. The good mayor fears it will incite criminal behavior and says that "defacing subway cars is hardly a joke." A jauntily cavalier activist judge restores party despite obvious slippery slope of what might be incited by stagings of *Oedipus Rex* or *Hamlet*.

At homeland insecurity, new categories of suspect profiles bubble forth in government advisory after government advisory. Race, ethnicity, religion, *a fortiori*—but the list churns on with up-to-the-minute brands of scoundrel like an endless ticker tape: Unusually clean-shaven men, men with long beards, people wearing heavy clothing or shoes with thick soles or big hats, women carrying large handbags, unknown delivery men bearing oversized packages, kids with backpacks or violin cases, cell-phone users, sweaty people, cool-as-a-sly-cucumber people, people with cameras, people praying aloud, people who blink too much or not enough, men with thick waists, women pretending to be pregnant, people who spend too much time in public libraries, men reeking of rosewater—on and on it goes. Most recently, we are to be on the lookout for the great masses of the unshaved, unwashed and unperfumed, to wit, "vagrants who seem out of place"—an almost calculatedly redundant designation—for fear they might be terrorists posing as "homeless people, shoeshiners, street vendors or street sweepers."

In once celestial cities, all of whose denizens are now deemed dangerous, one hears calls for house-to-house searches, shoot-to-kill policies and protection from "too many" civil rights. Debates rage about "political correctness" rather than whether this isn't beginning to look like martial law, or an effective immunization of police from discriminatory behavior, scattershot decision-making as well as deadly mistake. On the other side of the pond, London police send the mother of Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian electrician regrettably executed by official mistake, a sympathy note with a $27,000 check tucked in, as "compensation." The part that really brings tears to the eyes is a touchingly generous little coda assuring her that "if a claim were brought in future, then the sum offered today would be taken as being on account of any other payments."

"Political correctness," meanwhile, has morphed away from a dismissal of liberal martinets who don't appreciate a good joke and into an all-out question of life and death, patriotism and treason. These days, the politically correct are those shiny-eyed zealots who worry more about the feelings of terrorists than protecting the homeland and who would sacrifice the rude but real rank and file upon the altar of false gods and secular demons. According to this new narrative, the politically incorrect are the ones laying down their lives, rough and ready, who cut through the bull to shoot first and ask questions later.

I ponder this global theater in which all the men and women are merely players and pretenders. Our civic domesticity is embittered, haunted by the possibility of enemies amongst us whose voices speak like the ghost of Hamlet's father, whose shapes we "know" instinctively and in defiance of fancy rituals of politeness, legal niceties, book learning or empirical knowledge. Alas, poor us. The course we pursue may be politically disastrous, academically wrong, strategically flawed, statistically disproved—a cacophony of finger-pointing and calls to 911—but our leaders are stubborn guardians of the faith, enchanted by verities delivered to them in visions of good old country horse sense.

* * *

No Reader of The Nation *Left Behind*: President Bush is rumored to have a summer reading list that improves upon the literary preferences so often attributed to him. The new list is three books long by an ostentatiously sober heft: Mark Kurlansky's history of salt, John Barry's account of the great flu pandemic of 1918–19 and Edward Radzinsky's *Alexander II: The Last Great Tsar*. Salt. Plague. Czars.

Very presidential, but if you yearn for something studiously apolitical, here are my three favorite summer reads. Top of the list is performance artist Damali Ayo's *How to Rent a Negro*, just out from Lawrence Hill Books. It's a very funny expansion of the concept explored on her popular website, rent-a-negro.com—witty, empathetic, unsettling, hilarious. A kind of Miss Manners for the racially isolated yet yearning to connect. For those who do wish to rent a Negro, handy tips on how to enliven your parties with a little integration, how to impress your friends you're not a racist and how to compliment your Negro on the articulateness of his speech. And for the rentable Negroes in question, set-up advice and sound financial planning. Have you been giving your services as liberal eye candy away for free? Do you know how much to charge people who want to Touch The Hair?

I also recommend *Small Island*, by Andrea Levy, from Picador. It's a wry, engrossing love story that ranges from London to the Caribbean to India and back again during the years just after World War II. I could not put it down.

Finally, in the spirit of Eric Alterman's shameless, absolutely shameless, flair for self-promotion, allow me to suggest a *People* magazine critic's choice of the week, *Open House: Of Family, Friends, Food, Piano Lessons and the Search for a Room of My Own*, by yours truly. ■

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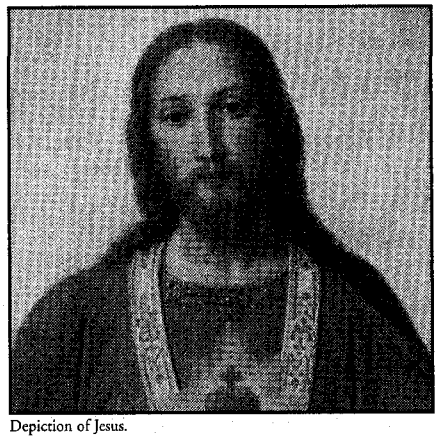

© Wood River Gallery.

Depiction of Jesus.

About Your Professor

Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The author or editor of 12 books, he has received many awards and prizes during his tenure at UNC including the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for excellence in teaching.

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ERIC ALTERMAN

The Red State *Times*, Continued

On August 17 the *New York Times* published a front-page appreciation of former Reagan Administration Attorney General Edwin Meese that neatly illustrates how so much of the media—including America's most influential newspaper and alleged headquarters of the liberal media conspiracy—bend over backward to coddle conservatives. The bias on display here is of a passive nature and is therefore not as obvious as the gratuitous attacks leveled at liberals discussed in my last column. But it is no less pernicious.

In the first place, the entire foundation for the story, written by Lynette Clemetson, is wholly speculative. It purports to explain how Meese laid the foundation for John Roberts's judicial philosophy with a speech he gave to the American Bar Association in 1985—but look at how many journalistic weasel words were necessary to justify its thesis: "Mr. Meese gave what *many say* was the speech of his career. Helping lay the foundation for the judicial wars that continue today, he advocated a 'jurisprudence of original intention.' The philosophy he promoted, one of strict adherence to *what proponents say* were the intentions of the writers of the Constitution, inspired a generation of conservatives—including, *some say*, a young lawyer named John G. Roberts Jr., now a Supreme Court nominee." (My italics.) In other words, none of the above may be true at all.

A second gimme offered to the far right is the story's assumption that the legal philosophy of "originalism" deserves to be taken seriously, as anything other than yet one more fundamentalist gimmick—à la "intelligent design"—designed to undermine what the rest of us consider to be reality. Owing to its commitment to the ideal of "objectivity," the *Times* treats the question as mere partisan debate, quoting liberals Laurence Tribe and Justice Brennan in opposition to Meese et al. In doing so, it reifies nonsense and offers its imprimatur to politically motivated pseudoscholarship. As the Constitutional Convention's leading expert, Stanford's Jack Rakove, explains in his Pulitzer Prize–winning history, *Original Meanings*, "Even the conservative framers themselves...having learned so much from a mere decade of self-government, and having celebrated their own ability to act from 'reflection and choice,'" would find "incredible...the idea that later generations could not improve upon their discoveries."

But the most egregious journalistic omissions come in the *Times*'s whitewash of Meese himself. Clemetson writes that Meese was "vilified by liberals as an ideologue and embroiled in frequent disputes with more moderate figures within the Reagan Administration," but "is now lionized by conservatives for his role in reshaping the judiciary." According to Leonard Leo, executive vice president of the Federalist Society, "he is our moral compass." Clemetson adds, however, "His effectiveness as attorney general was blunted by a 14-month ethics investigation into his role helping a contractor secure a defense contract for a proposed Iraqi pipeline. He resigned as attorney general after it was announced that no criminal charges would be filed." That's it. Moderates didn't approve of his political philosophy, and his ethical troubles never amounted to much.

Now here is some information about this conservative moral compass—much of it culled from *New York Times* reports of the time—that Clemetson and her editors chose not to include:

§ An independent prosecutor found Meese had probably violated federal conflict-of-interest laws when his family held telephone company stock worth thousands at a time when he was reviewing telecommunications policy at the Justice Department. He also concluded that "a trier of fact would probably conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Meese willfully permitted a materially false tax return to be filed for him."

§ The Senate Oversight of Government Management subcommittee found that Meese, as counselor to Reagan, had violated White House policy when he intervened to win a defense contract for the scandal-ridden Wedtech Corp.

§ During Iran/*contra*, Meese conspired with Reagan Administration officials to cover up the crimes committed, possibly even including the President's. He lied to the press and instructed other members of the Cabinet to do so. When conducting a Potemkin investigation, he told Reagan officials they were "under no obligation" to answer questions truthfully.

§ Republican William Weld, former US assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division, explained that he was frequently instructed to base his prosecutions on political and ideological criteria. As he understood it, investigations were dropped if "the political affiliation of [the person investigated] was likely to be Republican." But they were more likely to be approved, Weld said, if the person under investigation was a liberal.

(There's plenty more, for which we lack the space.)

If this were a single instance of such bias, it would be insignificant. Alas, the *Times* has had to apologize to its readers for its credulousness in believing the lies it was fed by the Bush Administration vis-à-vis its ruinous war in Iraq. It has also apologized for accepting the unfounded accusations of conservatives against the Clinton Administration about alleged atomic spying, during the Wen Ho Lee investigation. The *Times* still owes an apology in a more significant case as well: Seth Mnookin's *Hard News* reveals that in an unpublicized report by Marty Baron, then the *Times*'s associate managing editor and now editor in chief of the *Boston Globe*, he described the paper's coverage of the Lewinsky scandal as characterized by "repeating sensational reports...without confirming them," relying on "passive voice...as a substitute for sourcing," "speculation" and "overstatement based on evidence seen or heard." In almost every case, the victim was Bill Clinton.

So the so-called liberal *New York Times* terms itself too tough on Clinton, Democrats and liberals and too easy on Bush, Republicans and conservatives. As a result, it ends up misleading its readers, but it changes nothing about its coverage. I could write a book... ■

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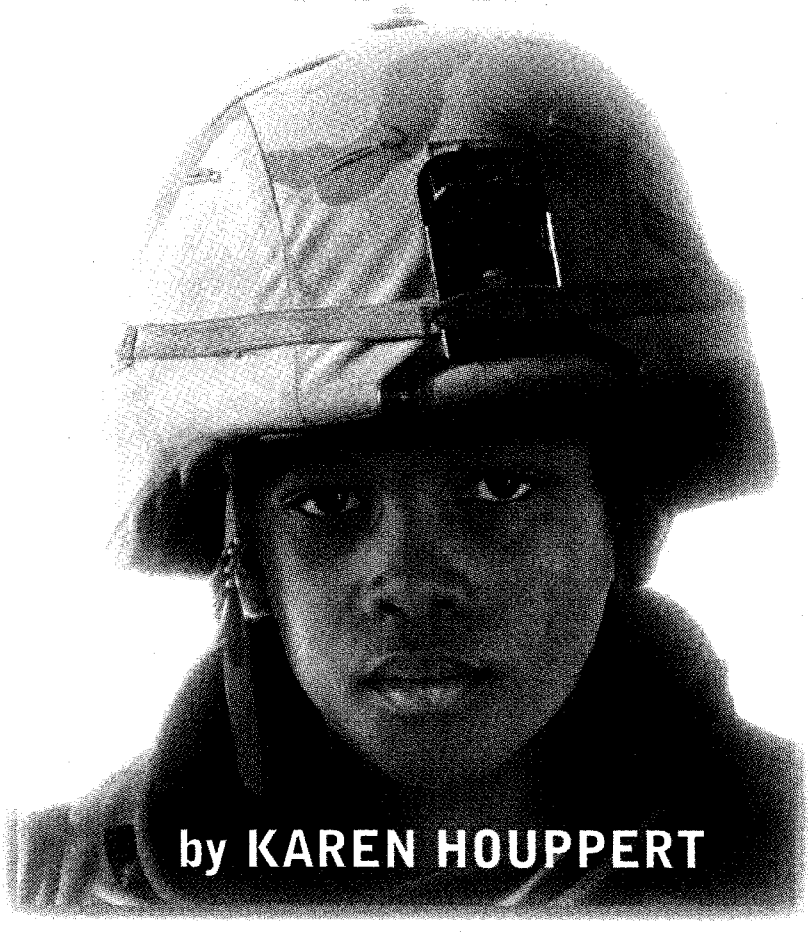
ARTICLES

MILITARY RECRUITERS ARE NOW TARGETING SIXTH GRADERS. WHO'S NEXT?



by KAREN HOUPPERT

The US Army Recruiting Command has a motto: "First to contact, first to contract." In the school recruiting handbook the Army gives to the 7,500 recruiters it has trawling the nation these days, the motto crops up so often it serves as a stuttering paean to aggressive new tactics—tactics that target increasingly younger students.

To make sure they are the first folks to contact students about their future plans, Army recruiters are ordered to approach tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders—repeatedly. Army officials spell out the rules of engagement: Recruiters are told to dig in deep at their assigned high schools, to offer their services as assistant football coaches—or basketball coaches or track coaches or wrestling coaches or baseball coaches (interestingly, not softball coaches or volleyball coaches)—to "offer to be a chaperon [*sic*] or escort for homecoming activities and coronations" (though not thespian ones), to "Deliver donuts and coffee for the faculty once a month," to participate visibly in Hispanic Heritage and Black History Month activities, to "get involved with local Boy Scout troops" (Girl Scouts aren't mentioned), to "offer to be a timekeeper at football games," to "serve as test proctors," to "eat lunch in the school cafeteria several times each month" and to "always remember secretary's week with a card or flowers." They should befriend student leaders and school staff: "Know your student influencers," they are told. "Identify these individuals and develop them as COIs" (centers of influence). After all, "some influential students such as the student president or the captain of the football team may not enlist; however, they can and will provide you with referrals who will enlist." Cast a wide net, recruiters are told. Go for the Jocks, but don't ignore the Brains. "Encourage college-capable individuals to defer their college until they have served in the Army."

Army brass urge recruiters to use a "trimester system of senior contacts," reaching out to high school seniors at three vulnerable points. In the spring, when students' futures loom largest, the handbook advises: "For some it is clear that college is not an option, at least for now. Let them know that the Army can fulfill their college aspirations later on."

Finally, recruiters must follow the vulnerable to college: "Focus on the freshman class [there] because they will have the highest dropout rate. They often lack both the direction and funds to fully pursue their education." (Thus do decreasing federal funds for college complement recruiters' goals.)

"The good [high school] program is a proactive one," the sloganeering commanders remind. "The early bird gets the worm."

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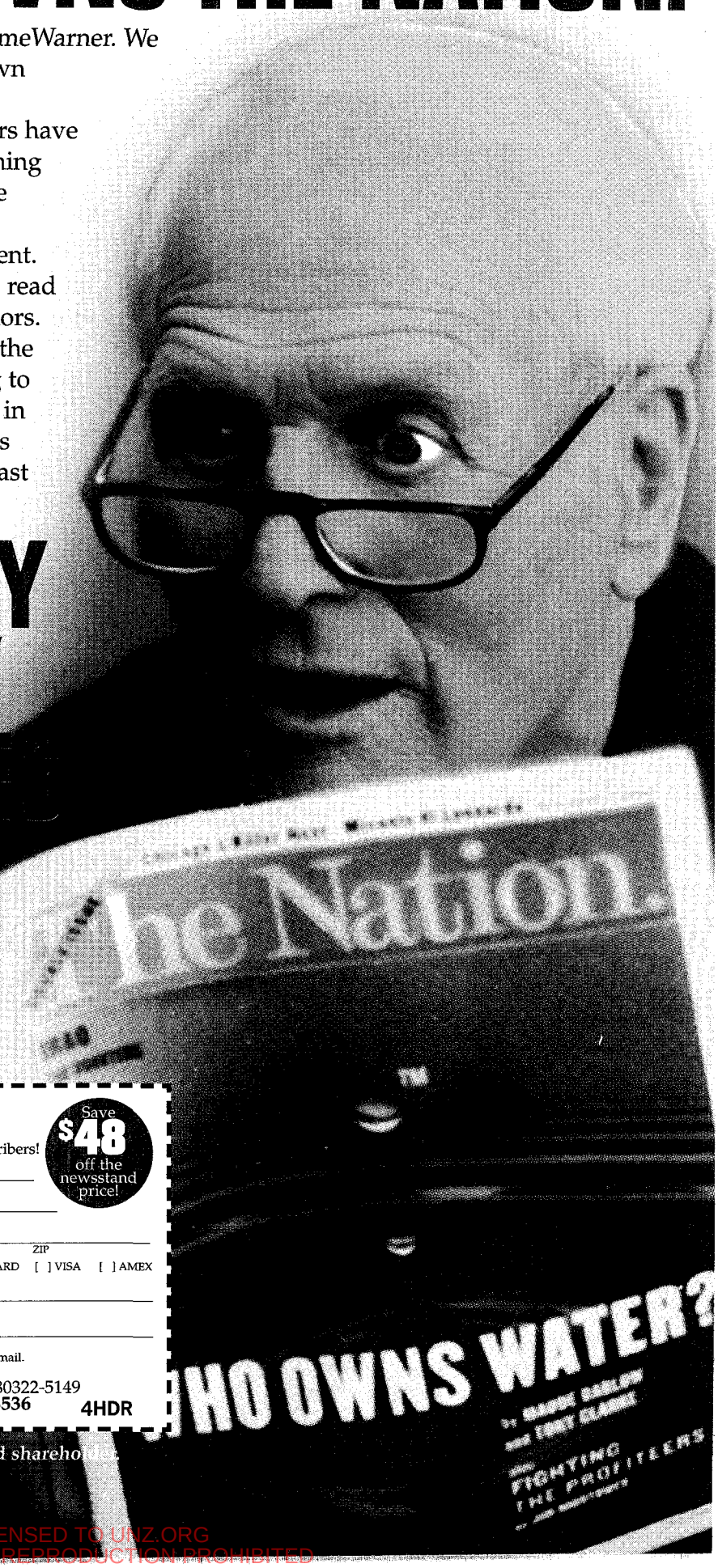

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Junior ROTC—A Vital Feeder Stream

The Army, which missed its recruiting quotas in four out of the six months ending in July for active-duty troops—and nine out of the past nine months for the Army National Guard—is getting desperate. Still more than 16,000 recruits shy of its 2005 goal, and with disaffected teens plentiful but skeptical, the Army brass has added 1,000 new recruiters to pound the pavement—or linoleum hallways—in the past year. New Junior ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) programs are being introduced in high schools across the country, and lately kids as young as 11 are being invited to join pre-JROTC at their elementary and middle schools. The Army has increased its recruitment campaign budget by $500 million this year, and it is slated to introduce a new ad campaign in September emphasizing "patriotism." (In the past, it has focused on job opportunities and personal growth.) The Army hopes Congress will agree to a slew of new signing benefits designed to raise average enlistment bonuses from $14,000 to $17,000 (with some recruits getting as much as $30,000 for hard-to-fill specialties and some reenlistment bonuses spiking as high as $75,000).

Sometimes the Army gets even more creative. On the sly, recruiters have helped high schoolers cheat on entrance exams, fudge their drug tests and hide police records, as the *New York Times* reported in May. The *Times* exposé revealed that the Army investigated 1,118 "recruiting improprieties" last year, ranging from coercing young people to lying to them. It substantiated 320 of these.

That such tactics are deemed necessary says a lot about the recruiters' desperation despite their extensive opportunities to engage students at both the college and high school levels. Recruiters' access to college campuses has been protected since 1996 under the Solomon Amendment, which ties federal funding to schools' willingness to permit recruiters on campus. And the military is taking full advantage, especially at community colleges, where students with fewer choices are more likely to consider a military career. Now the military has gained free access to high schools as well, under a little-known clause in the No Child Left Behind Act. Nestled among florid tributes to education reform and clunky legalese is a brief passage stating that all public schools are required to share students' names, addresses and telephone numbers with recruiters. "They have unrestricted access to kids in the schools, cafeterias and classrooms," says Hany Khalil, an organizing coordinator at United for Peace and Justice, a national antiwar coalition. "They've even brought Humvees onto campuses to make the prospect of going to war seem sexy and exciting."

And it works. Not necessarily for the white doctor's son in the suburbs, who can see both Princeton and a Porsche in his future, but for low-income urban youth. In fact, the fewer alternatives a young person has, the better. "The military recruiters are especially targeting working-class youth and communities of color," says Khalil. "These are the communities that don't have access to good schools or good jobs, so it's easier to take advantage of them." Khalil's comments are substantiated by Defense Department population studies showing that most recruits are drawn from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, that 43 percent come from the South (while only 15 percent come from the more populous Northeast) and that only 8 percent of new recruits come from families with a father or mother in the "professions."

On college campuses a different set of tactics is employed—not always with enough care about the truth of financial claims. "My son's recruiter told us that his student loans would be paid in full if he joined the Army," says Kathy Allwein, an administrative assistant in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, whose 21-year-old son was in his third year of college and constantly worried about the $19,000 student loan he carried when recruiters approached him in 2003. Relieved by the promise of financial help, he immediately signed on the dotted line. After serving ten months in Iraq, he learned the Army would not be paying his loans, because although they were procured through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, they were not technically government loans. "We didn't even realize the difference, to be honest," says Allwein. "For a long time the recruiter just told us to be patient and the loans would be paid for. We've been very patient, but when the bill collectors start knocking on the door, it gets a little scary."

Deceived and disillusioned, the Allweins are now getting mail from recruiters trying to sign up their 16-year-old daughter. Fortunately, Allwein, who opposes the Iraq War, has yet to answer the phone and find a recruiter on the other end of the line: "I would tear them from limb to limb," she says.

Seeking to further push recruitment among target populations, the military is expanding its Junior ROTC—a longtime recruitment tool particularly popular in the South and in urban minority communities. Describing JROTC as "adventure training," the military is bringing it to ninety-one new high schools next year. But JROTCs are already an integral part of the formal curriculum in 1,555 high schools, in every state. Taught by retired military—who may or may not have college degrees—the instructors bring what the Army describes as "discipline, leadership training, military history, marksmanship and rifle safety" to 273,000 high school JROTC "cadets" today, up from 231,000 in 1999. Forty-five percent typically enlist after the experience. With the cost of the JROTC teachers' salaries shared by the military and the school district, it's a win-win situation: Cash-strapped schools get bargain-rate teachers for a slew of additional elective courses; the military gets inside the schools for one-on-one contact with potential recruits. In some overburdened public school systems, students are involuntarily placed in the program. Teachers and students in Los Angeles, for example, have complained that high school administrators are enrolling reluctant students in JROTC as an alternative to overcrowded gym classes.

ASVAB—No Child Left Untested

To help high school students find "their rightful place," the Army's standard recruiting tool is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). High school juniors and seniors are encouraged to take this test to "identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations." The Army, which encourages high school career counselors to administer the test—ideally, making it mandatory for all juniors or

Karen Houppert is a freelance reporter and the author of Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—for Better or Worse *(Ballantine).*

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seniors—has stopped spelling out the acronym in the past few years. Many parents and students don't know what it stands for. Carefully described in literature and on websites simply as a "career exploration program," the ASVAB, according to the Army, is "specifically designed to provide recruiters with a source of prequalified leads." Further, "It gives the recruiter the students' Armed Forces Qualification Test scores, military aptitude composites, and career goals. It identifies the best potential prospects for recruitment that allows recruiters to work smarter." It also provides the recruiter with "concrete and personal information about the student"—the better to contact him or her repeatedly.

"My son scored in the top 1 percent of the ASVAB," says Lou Plummer of Fayetteville, North Carolina. "When the recruiters got the scores we got almost nightly calls for a while from the Air Force, the Marines, the Army and the Navy." Plummer, an Army vet himself, encouraged his 17-year-old son, Drew, to heed the recruiters' call and become the fourth generation in their family to serve in the armed forces. "He was an obviously very bright kid, but a slacker who was never into school," Plummer says. "I thought this would be a good opportunity for him to learn a lot." Plummer co-signed, since Drew was under age, and just weeks before the terrorist attacks of September 11, Drew joined the Navy. (Drew has since been "discharged other than honorably," after publicly protesting the US involvement in Iraq, being disciplined for disloyalty as a result and eventually going AWOL.) Lou Plummer has become an outspoken antiwar activist, and he bristles when he continues to get calls from recruiters for his 18-year-old daughter. His advice to similarly harassed parents? "Tell recruiters your child is gay or lesbian," Plummer says. "I've heard that works pretty well."

Meanwhile, confusion swirls around the rules for recruiters. Though parents can sign an "opt out" form that prevents schools from giving out information about their kids to recruiters, and students can decline to take the ASVAB, few families know their rights. According to Arlene Inouye, a speech and language specialist in the Los Angeles Unified School District and a co-founder of Coalition Against Militarism in our Schools, it's not unusual for students to be strong-armed into taking the test. "It's a voluntary test, but students don't know that," she says, describing a situation in which students at Fremont High in South Central Los Angeles didn't realize it was a military test until they walked into the room and saw the uniformed proctors. Nine students refused and were suspended. Later, under pressure, administrators reconsidered and reinstated the students. "A lot of people here are concerned about the issue," Inouye says, "but don't know what to do about it."

Even those inside the military are worried about such tactics, with critics suggesting that in the Army's rush to fill its ranks, it is recruiting those who are ill qualified to serve. (And weeding out poor-performing recruits just got a whole lot harder; in the spring, Army brass moved the decision for discharge up the chain of command—a transparent effort to stop the costly hemorrhaging of marginal recruits.) The Army insists, however, that this is not the case. "No, we haven't lowered the enlistment standards in any way," says Army spokesperson Douglas Smith. According to Army figures for 1999, 90 percent of active-duty recruits were high school grads and 63 percent scored in the top half of the ASVAB; thus far in 2005, 90 percent are still high school grads and 71 percent scored in the top half of the ASVAB.

Playgrounds and Parade Grounds

Today Chicago is the military's rising star. Cementing its reputation as the public school system with the largest military program, it grew last year to include 10,000 teen "cadets" in its elementary, middle and high schools. Chicago has joined Florida and Texas in offering military-run after-school programs to sixth, seventh and eighth graders; the city's youngsters drill with wooden rifles and chant time-honored marching cadences ("I used to date a high school queen/Now I lug an M-16," etc.).

But in Chicago, as in other cities and towns across the country, a coalition of indignant parents, concerned teachers and savvy activists has formed in order to draw attention to the issue. "The local school council was asleep at the switch when the military after-school program was proposed at Goethe Elementary School," says current Goethe school council member Jim Rhodes, who successfully spearheaded a drive to eliminate the program this year. "It didn't raise any red flags until one of the teachers wrote an impassioned letter about how they were marching with wooden guns and showing how attractive and fun the military could be, to influence these kids to go into JROTC when they got to high school, and then hopefully enlist after that." Even beyond its efforts to seduce

How to Say No

With the US military funneling millions of dollars into youth recruitment efforts, counter-recruitment projects are gearing up too. Here are some of the major ones.

American Friends Service Committee: National Youth and Militarism Program: www.youth4peace.org; (215) 241-7046.

National Network Opposing Militarization of Youth (a good way to find local counter-recruitment groups): www.youthandthemilitary.org; (215) 241-7176.

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation: Youth Outreach: www.wagingpeace.org; (805) 965-3443. Note: The foundation's demilitarization guide, a must-read for those interested in counter-recruitment efforts, is available at www.campusactivism.org/demilguide.

The Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities: www.projectyano.org.

The Student Peace Action Network: www.studentpeaceaction.org; (301) 565-4050.

United for Peace and Justice: Counter Military Recruitment Campaign: www.unitedforpeace.org; (212) 868-5545.

LEAH CALDWELL

Leah Caldwell is a Nation *intern.*

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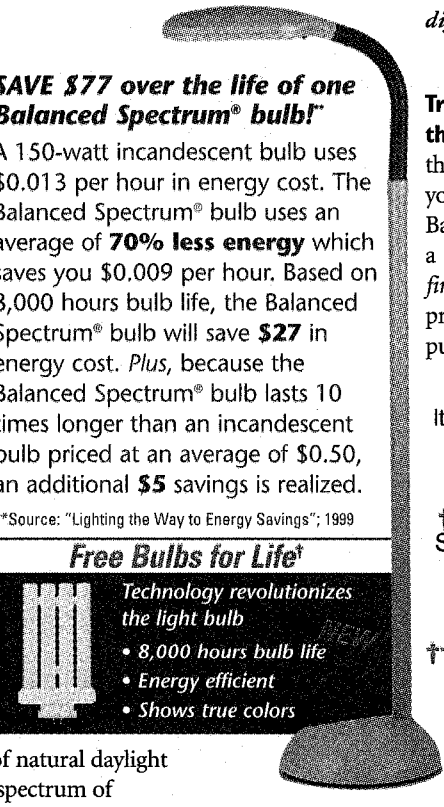

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kids into the military, Rhodes worried about its educational value. "It was sold to the parents in a presentation as a citizen and leadership program," he said. "But it ended up just being about obedience."

Undaunted by opposition to the military's presence in the schools, Chicago, which already has two military academies and a separate naval academy for high school students, intends to add a second naval academy in September. The new, 600-student Senn High Naval Academy will be jointly run by the Navy and the city. In such schools students are typically uniformed, and military bearing and discipline are required. Designed to promote discipline, citizenship and values among troubled students, they are seen as a solution to a problem for school districts and a pool of potential recruits for the armed services.

JROTC spokesperson Paul Kotakis is quick to clarify that the initiative to create such academies does not come from the military. "In some instances, some academic institutions have decided that JROTC is so worthwhile that they have made it mandatory," he explains. "So when all the students attending the school are required to attend JROTC, the 'academies' are created—and that is a decision made by the individual school, not the Army."

Parents objected to a new military academy in Chicago, but Mayor Richard Daley said, 'I believe in military academies all over this city.'

But while school administrators, school boards and politicians may be drawn to the discipline of the JROTC academies, some parents make it a hard sell. When parents in Chicago got wind last year of school board plans to open Senn, they mounted a campaign to stop it. Troubled by press reports indicating that 18 percent of students in Chicago's three military academies join the armed services upon graduation, hundreds of parents and high school students crammed into a school board meeting to protest. But the school board held firm. The members had the support of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. "I don't know why people are so upset about this idea of discipline and this idea of military service," Daley told the *Chicago Sun-Times* in December. "I believe in military academies all over this city."

Recruiting Parents—The New Headache

Meanwhile, whether the Army solicits 17-year-old recruits, who require their parents' signature before enlisting, or those who've reached the age of majority, parents—or "adult influencers," in Army parlance—are proving a serious obstacle to recruiting goals. According to a November 2004 Defense Department poll, only 25 percent of parents said they'd encourage their teens to enlist, compared with 42 percent two years ago.

"For the first time, our recruiters are having to really work not only with the applicant but with their family members to explain why enlisting is important not only for the applicant but for the country," says Army Recruiting Command spokesperson Douglas Smith. When pressed by parents about the issue of safety, Smith says, recruiters are forthright. "What they can say is, the young man or woman enlisting is going to receive very good basic and advanced training from the Army. And that Army basic training is designed to prepare every soldier with basic combat skills so they are trained to protect themselves and their fellow soldiers if they're called upon." Recruiters reassure parents that even though the nation is at war, the Army hasn't shortened training or taken any shortcuts with gear or weaponry. "But it's an emotional issue," Smith acknowledges. "And we can't give any guarantees of safety. And we can't say anything to lead someone to think there is such a thing as a truly safe occupation in the Army." In the end, a plea to patriotism seems best. "Ultimately, there is no answer to parents but 'service to country,'" says Smith.

Thus the Army Recruiting Command both tiptoes around the issue of a dangerous war in Iraq and simultaneously insists that American parents need to face the facts and to ante up their children. "What I think we've got to do is articulate to the nation that we're at war, and this is a global struggle, this is a generational struggle," Defense Department spokesperson Col. Gary Keck told the *Army Times* in June. "It's not going to be over in two years. It's going to be with us for many years."

Of course, this message is the opposite of the one the Bush Administration has been sending. Until his June speech at Fort Bragg—in which for the first time he pleaded for recruits by reminding "those watching tonight who are considering a military career [that] there is no higher calling than service in our armed forces"—Bush spent a lot of time downplaying the sacrifices this war would exact from Americans.

The conflict between the military, which would like Bush to turn up the volume by regularly reminding Americans that we are at war and that war requires sacrifice, and the Administration, which is concerned with the political need to minimize the war's costs, is reflected in the recent linguistic debate over whether to continuing calling the current state of affairs a "war on terror" (President Bush) or to shift to broader, less militaristic terms like the "global struggle against violent extremism" (Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld). Though the latter was clunky, it reflected Rumsfeld's response to the Iraq War's decreasing popularity: to recast it as one aspect of an international "struggle" against not just Al Qaeda but all "Islamic extremists." The use of the term "struggle" has the bonus of sounding less violent and more inclusive of nonmilitary tactics. But just as Rumsfeld hopes to fudge things—we're not "at war" per se, just "struggling"—a casualty rate of 18,745 dead and wounded makes it harder to bury the cost of this "struggle."

Historically, what has made Americans willing to sacrifice their lives—or let their children do so—has been the certainty that military action is both unavoidable and necessary to achieve some greater good. Bush tried to make this point in his Fort Bragg speech. "We live in freedom because every generation has produced patriots willing to serve a cause greater than themselves," he said. But the current "struggle" in Iraq is a hard sell; and the current struggle to meet recruiting goals reflects that. ■

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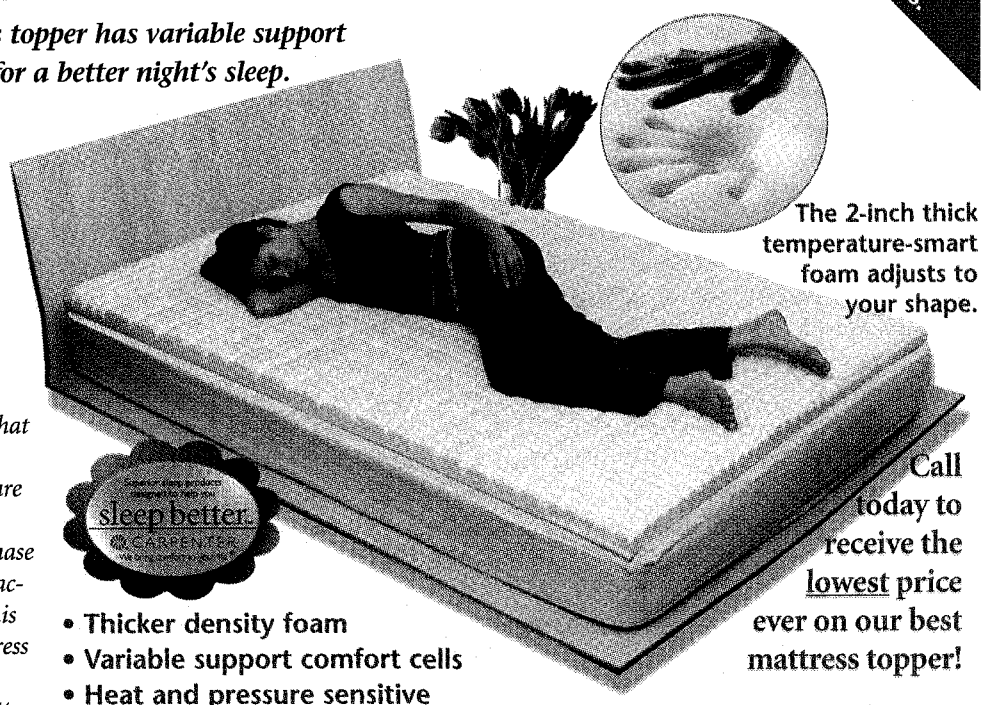

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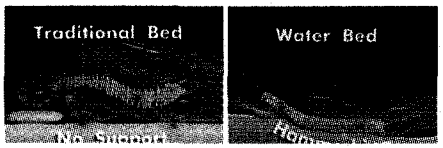

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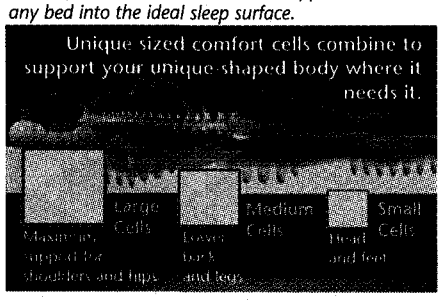
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IN ADVANCING PROGRESSIVE GOALS, TWO BALLOT LINES CAN BE BETTER THAN ONE.

The Power of Fusion Politics

ALYSSA KATZ

Last election day, as thousands of New Yorkers bused out to Ohio on a mission to stop George W. Bush from being re-elected, a few dozen stayed behind in Albany and made sure David Soares won.

TIM ROBINSON

The volunteers knocked on doors street by street; in the housing projects, hall by hall. The day John Kerry lost, the Working Families Party helped Soares take the job of Albany District Attorney away from a machine Democrat notorious for condemning drug offenders to extreme prison terms. With the rallying cry "Reform Rockefeller Drug Laws Now," the Soares campaign got voters to the polls by tapping into public outrage at seeing lives destroyed and billions wasted by the justice system. Soares had won the primary as a Democrat. In the general election he was still a Democrat, but on the ballot he was something else, too: the candidate of the Working Families Party.

A few months earlier, the WFP operation hit Westchester County. Volunteers trawled suburban streets delivering the message: "We're telling State Senator Nick Spano that New Yorkers need a raise in the minimum wage." A few residents cursed and slammed doors. But more often than not they agreed, and received a sheet of paper, a pen and a chance to handwrite a plea to the Senator. "It's about time!" exclaimed an expensively groomed woman as she took a clipboard.

That wasn't the first or last time Spano, a high-ranking Republican, heard from his constituents—and the greeting wasn't always so polite. A few weeks earlier, Spano had endured an "accountability session," a public event community organizers use to extract commitments from elected officials. In a YMCA hall packed with some 150 union members and other activists, filled with cries of "$5.15 is not enough!" Spano expressed surprise at the turnout—and, knowing he had little choice, signed a poster-size pledge to push legislation raising New York's minimum wage to $7.10. "I am on your side," Spano declared. "I will deliver this personally to the majority leader."

But it was not just because he was caught on the spot that Spano came around on this issue—he knew that the Working Families Party, which organized the session, had a card to play: the ballot line in elections throughout New York State that it has wielded since 1998. In New York, election laws allow "fusion"—candidates for any public office can run as the nominee of more than one political party. The votes candidates receive are tallied separately by party, then combined. Like many candidates in New York State, Spano was hungry for the extra boost of that additional ballot line, which could make all the difference on election day. With the WFP's progressive seal of approval, Spano could expect some votes from people who might never otherwise support a Republican.

Fusion is powerful. Voting in the Working Families column is no wasted gesture—every ballot counts. It sidesteps the Nader Effect, since voters can show their support for a progressive party agenda without spoiling the chances of a candidate—usually a Democrat—who has a shot at winning. And if there's an opportunity to take out a bad Democrat, like former Albany DA Paul Clyne, Working Families can run its own candidate.

Fusion politics also gets complicated, and occasionally controversial.

The Working Families Party gave Spano its ballot line—and with it the race. It turned into a contest so close that it had to be sorted out in court. Spano prevailed against Andrea Stewart-Cousins, a progressive African-American Democratic county legislator. He got 1,800 votes on the WFP line, and held on to his seat by just eighteen votes. This, in a state where Democrats have been laboring to retake the majority in the State Senate.

But the Working Families leadership was satisfied. In exchange for the endorsement of Spano and other Republicans in a tight race, state Republicans relented after years of opposition and hiked the minimum wage, which raised pay for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. By wielding the power to make or break one of its top leaders, Working Families pushed the Republican Party to take a progressive stance.

Much more often, that ballot line goes to a Democrat. The expectations are no different. Last November US Senator Chuck Schumer ran as both a Democrat and a Working Families nominee, and votes on either counted equally toward his re-election. But he got nearly 169,000 of his votes on the WFP line—3.6 percent of his total. Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, running for governor in 2006, solicited Working Families as his first endorsement. "What this is about," said Spitzer as he accepted the party's support, "is embracing progressive politics. It's about embracing the ideas and the values that will change the lives of citizens across the state; being willing to challenge the status quo; being willing to say, If it's broken we will fix it.... You have proven that substance matters in politics."

It's also about Spitzer buying into the WFP's sophisticated organizing apparatus. In acknowledgment of his cash contributions—the Attorney General was a keynote speaker at a party fundraiser—Spitzer can expect Working Families canvassers to go door to door or hold rallies in key districts he needs to win. And it's understood that Spitzer will have an obligation to deliver on Working Families' demands.

Spitzer's a radical by Wall Street standards, but not by the WFP's. Items on the party's legislative agenda include universal healthcare, rent regulation, a living wage and closing the income

Alyssa Katz is editor at large of City Limits *magazine and a Charles H. Revson Fellow at Columbia University.*

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Urgent: Special Autumn Driving Notice

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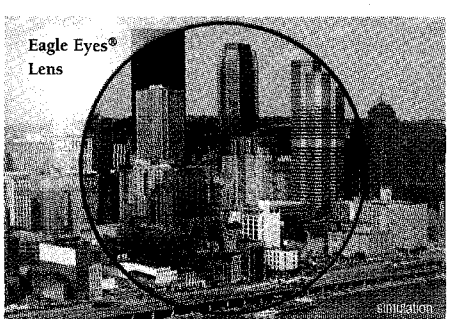

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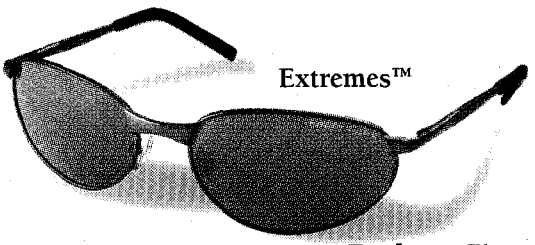

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gap through progressive taxation. Founded and led by a coalition of labor unions and community organizations—including the Northeast regions of the United Auto Workers and the Communications Workers of America (CWA), locals of the garment and hotel workers' union UNITE HERE and the service workers' SEIU, ACORN and Citizen Action—Working Families claims an organized bloc of voters committed to economic populism, and the party uses them to get major-party politicians to follow the Working Families agenda. Its organizers strive to appeal simultaneously to *Nation*-reading liberals, people of color alienated by the Democrats, and working-class whites.

The WFP's ability to reach that third group, which Republicans have so successfully wrested from the Democrats, says a lot about what fusion can accomplish. A poll of New York State CWA members found that non-Democrats were likelier than Democrats to use the WFP ballot line to cast a vote for Hillary Clinton in 2000—of the 38 percent of that group who went for Clinton, eight in ten cast their vote under Working Families. Votes on the WFP line helped Democratic challenger Tim Bishop beat a conservative incumbent Republican Congressman on Long Island—in a district that went overwhelmingly for Republican Governor George Pataki on the same ballot.

'Common-sense progressivism is popular, but you need a way to make it visible. Nothing's more powerful than a ballot line.' —Dan Cantor

WFP executive director Dan Cantor and a leadership circle of labor union political directors, community organizers and staff hunt for practical legislative and policy campaigns that will resonate with the party's target constituencies. "What issues do you want to move?" asks Cantor. "What moral disgrace brings issues into the electoral moment?" They then put those issues into play with a one-two punch: a grassroots field operation anchored by local chapters in the state's biggest counties, coupled with the ability, through fusion voting, to cross-endorse Democrats or Republicans for public office. Targeted politicians can't afford to ignore the party's agenda.

Less splashily, Working Families has become a fixture in local political races in the state's bigger cities and in the suburbs of New York City, delivering a get-out-the-vote apparatus and its progressive WF brand label in exchange for influence over candidates' policy agendas. Some of those relationships spawn legislative breakthroughs, including a 2002 living-wage law in Westchester. Many others simply rubber-stamp an undistinguished major-party favorite.

The party has held off on this year's New York City mayoral race, where Democratic candidates are struggling. Republican Mayor Mike Bloomberg leads them in the polls—among Democratic voters. Some of the WFP's member unions have already endorsed Bloomberg, while others can't agree on which Democrat to support. The party is showing its influence in subtler ways—for example, in candidate Fernando Ferrer's proposal to revive a stock-transfer tax to increase funding for schools, an idea the WFP actively promoted.

Starting with a campaign this year against Social Security privatization, Working Families has also begun targeting members of Congress in between election cycles. And it's not just assaulting Republicans: In August party leaders called for House minority leader Nancy Pelosi to remove two black Democratic Congressmen, Greg Meeks and Edolphus Towns, from their respective positions on the Financial Services and Energy and Commerce committees because they voted for CAFTA and other bills benefiting corporate powers. Prodded by Working Families, unions are sending letters to members in the Congressmen's districts informing them about the votes. They're doing all this on a shoestring; the WFP's entire budget is about $1.6 million a year, just $300,000 of which, according to the WFP, represents dues from its union affiliates. Revenues from door-to-door canvassing are growing steadily, a sign of broader public support.

Even the party's opponents acknowledge its influence. Kathryn Wylde, president and CEO of the business-lobby group Partnership for New York City, fought the WFP's ultimately successful effort to require some companies under contract with New York City government to pay employees a minimum of $10 an hour. "When it comes to bringing resources, bringing influence to bear on important public policies," says Wylde, "their political success, in terms of electing and supporting people in key positions, makes them a force to be reckoned with."

Working Families made 2004, of all years, a moment for progressive political gains in a state, governed by a Republican and a divided state legislature, that hasn't recently been out front on social and economic reforms. Now that it's proving its power to make things happen, the WFP is looking to export fusion voting to other states. "Common-sense progressivism is actually popular, but you need a way to make it visible," says Cantor. "Nothing's more powerful than a ballot line."

Franchising fusion is an undertaking somewhere on the highway between ambitious and quixotic. Most states abolished cross-endorsements more than a century ago, as the major parties consolidated their power. Besides New York, fusion remains legal only in Connecticut, Delaware, Vermont, South Carolina, Mississippi and Utah, and in none is the ballot line so accessible and useful as in New York. In 1997 the US Supreme Court ruled in *Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party* that states cannot be compelled under the First Amendment to allow candidates to run on multiple party lines.

So Working Families and its labor and community allies are bracing for a state-by-state slog. In Connecticut the party is already up and running. It has to qualify in each legislative district, by first running candidates exclusively on the Working Families line and getting at least 1 percent of the vote. If it passes the threshold, in subsequent elections in that district it can cross-endorse candidates from any other party, in any race. Working Families is now on the ballot in sixty-five out of the state's 187 districts.

The party made a move for influence last fall: Leaders sat down with Connecticut State Representative Jim Amann, a Democrat who was enmeshed in a fight for House leadership, and agreed to pull Working Families nominees out of races where the Democratic candidate was an Amann ally, in exchange for

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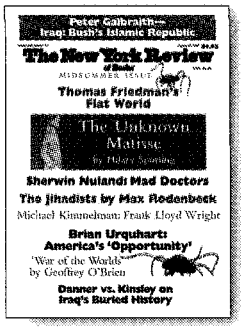

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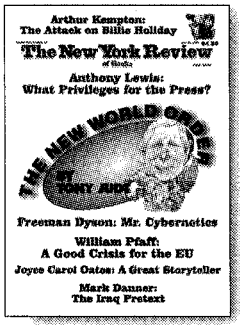

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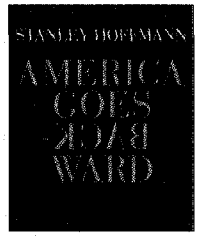

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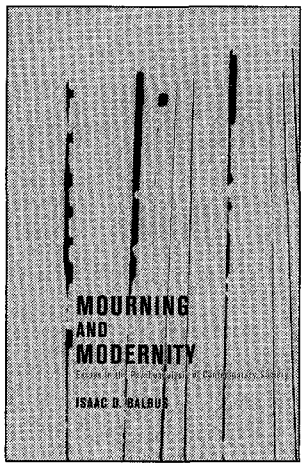

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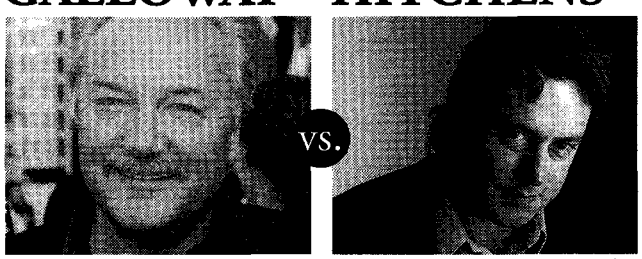

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Amann's support on the WFP's Connecticut agenda. "Even in districts where we couldn't cross-endorse, we could withdraw our candidate, and that gave us some leverage," explains party organizer Jon Green. Amann won, although that hasn't yet produced any legislative gains for the WFP.

Next up is Massachusetts. Starting September 21, a Working Families–led coalition will be collecting signatures to get a referendum on the ballot legalizing fusion voting. It is likely to be a difficult fight. In Massachusetts, state legislators have ways to thwart the results of a referendum. Fusion is unlikely to hold much appeal for them, since the Statehouse is solidly Democratic. And some of the state's progressive political organizers are balking at joining the emerging fusion coalition. They say they've already won some of the same gains WFP has—including a minimum-wage hike. "We win so much in the legislature just by going to the legislature," says Harris Gruman, director of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts, a grassroots organizing group. "We don't need to change the rules. The rules are working for us, now that we are working them."

"It's only natural that there would be a healthy dose of skepticism and nervousness," says Patrick Gaspard, vice president of politics and legislation for 1199SEIU and a veteran strategist with Working Families. "But look at what's been made possible in New York State as a result of people coming in and saying, 'I want to do a chunk of my work through this political institution.'... Having that flexibility has been a benefit to [1199's] membership."

The Maine legislature held a hearing earlier this year on a bill that would bring New York–style fusion to the state. There's interest in fusion, explains State Representative Hannah Pingree of North Haven, who introduced the bill, because the Green Party has repeatedly spoiled races for Democrats, siphoning off enough votes to let Republicans win. Democrats control the Statehouse, but by a slim margin. As she works to acquaint her colleagues with fusion, Pingree also has to acknowledge that the benefits may not flow just to Democrats. "People look at this as a way to promote the left, but it also could be a way for conservatives to advance as well," she notes. That concern is particularly acute among progressive leaders considering adopting fusion in Oregon, a state with an active radical right.

Cantor and partners are also sowing seeds in Delaware and exploring litigation in New Jersey, where they plan to argue that fusion voting is protected by the state Constitution. And Cantor is particularly excited about Ohio, under consideration for a 2006 ballot measure legalizing fusion. Cantor sees the presidential election results—where voters in a state with huge job losses went for the Republican—as an opportunity. Working Families' target constituency, he says, is "people who do not want to vote on the Democratic line but want to vote for the more progressive candidate. That's how you get somewhere in Ohio."

Wherever it goes next, Working Families will be highly dependent on its friends in labor for funds, person-power and political muscle. Lately, of course, those friends have been preoccupied with the decision by SEIU, the Teamsters and other unions in the Change to Win Coalition to leave the AFL-CIO. It's too soon to say what the departure bodes for the WFP. Still, there may be a growth opportunity: As labor works

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to figure out how to maintain undivided political influence, Working Families, with fusion voting, has found a way to build just that, pulling together unions for common strategic purposes. Bob Master, co-chair of the party and one of its founders, is Northeast political director of the CWA, which remains part of the AFL-CIO, as does the UAW, another pivotal WFP player. But quite a few of the WFP's most active union affiliates are with Change to Win: large and influential locals of SEIU, UNITE HERE, the Teamsters and the Laborers.

Master's co-chair, Bertha Lewis, executive director of ACORN's New York City chapter, has to insure that her members—poor people, mostly black and Latino—get their interests represented in a party dominated by organized labor. ACORN buys power through its organizing acumen, and through its communities' sheer numbers. Election turnout shows spikes in areas in Brooklyn and elsewhere where ACORN worked to get out the vote (though not always on the Working Families line). "In certain neighborhoods," says Lewis, "*we* are the machine." Fusion voting, she declares, "is the political tool of brown America."

Recruitment into an unknown cause didn't go down easily for ACORN members. "There ain't no way people are going to give up being a Democrat in order to be something they never heard of," Julia Boyd, a Brooklyn ACORN veteran, remembers saying. "There's no track record. Who are you? People felt like it was just another scam to get publicity or get your name in the papers. It was a difficult job to convince me."

Working Families showed its ability to turn out large numbers of minority voters with the election of David Soares as Albany District Attorney. The party sought out this race. It had interns call every county in the state to see which incumbents were up for re-election, then singled out Paul Clyne as especially vulnerable. Working Families handpicked Soares, who at the time was an obscure prosecutor in Clyne's office.

"When I went out and sought the endorsement, people laughed at me!" says Karen Scharff, executive director of Citizen Action of New York and a leader in Soares's campaign. "There was a strong Democratic Party. The candidate was completely unknown to the public, not politically active. It's a majority-white district, with no history of electing people of color." As a prosecutor, Soares had founded a project that promoted alternative sentencing for young offenders, and the core of his support came from civil rights groups and progressive religious institutions. Working Families and Citizen Action turned out throngs of volunteers—culled from sources ranging from church choirs to defunct Howard Dean meetup groups. Some of them are now running for local public office for the first time.

But building strong local chapters that bring citizens more deeply into power has been an uphill climb. "There are no resources put into New York City chapter and club organizing," says Dorothy Siegel, a longtime Brooklyn civic activist who three years ago decided to focus her energy on building citizen participation in the Working Families Party—"to make it less of an alliance of labor unions, ACORN and Citizen Action, and more of a partnership organization with real grassroots chapters and clubs." In Brooklyn, she says, she's been doing the work herself, as a volunteer. "There's just one organizer for all of New York City," Siegel points out.

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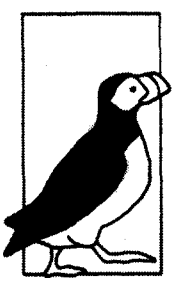

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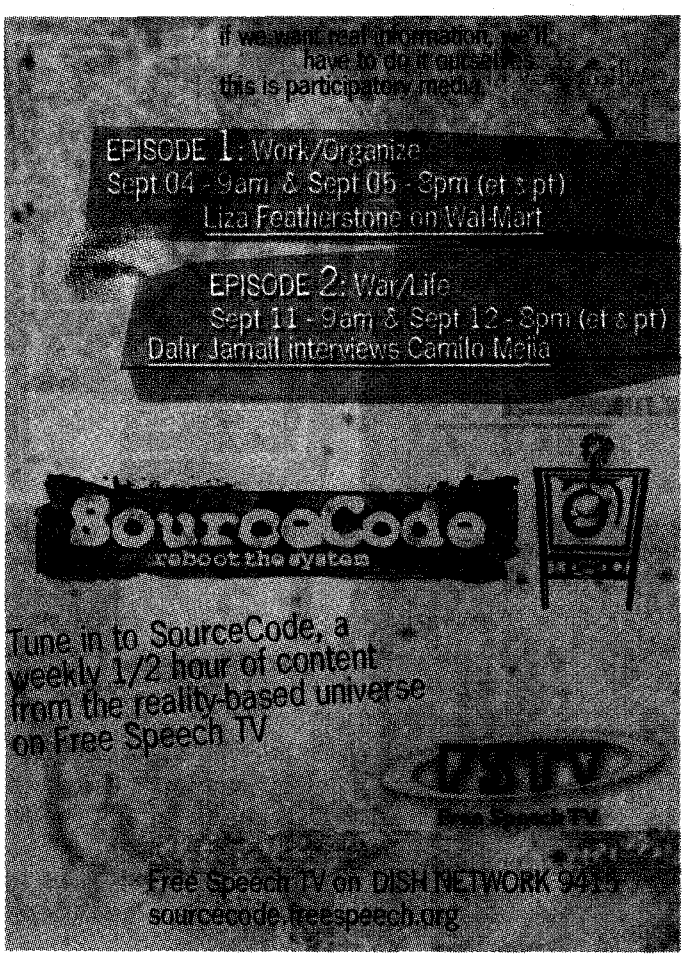
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"This is a party that does not have a lot of resources," notes Democratic State Senator Eric Schneiderman, whose campaign committees have contributed to Working Families. "They have to raise money to put out the troops." Schneiderman is the former chair of the New York Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, and he put aside his misgivings about the Spano endorsement to make an appearance with Working Families in Massachusetts, supporting the move to bring fusion voting there. He believes the party is important to progressives' national prospects. "There's a lot of concern among progressive activists that the Democratic Party is too much in the grip of consultants who are always suggesting that they slide to the right and take conservative positions to accommodate swing voters, rather than exciting our own beliefs and animating people," says Schneiderman. "The hope is that the Working Families Party can empower progressive Democrats within the Democratic Party."

Working Families' distinction from the likes of the Independence Party, whose ballot line Bloomberg is counting on to draw New York City voters who just won't pull a lever for a Republican—or New York's Liberal Party, which started out as just that but deteriorated into a patronage factory—is its commitment to engaging citizen-activists at the local level and building power from there, much as conservatives did a generation ago. Political consultant Ethan Geto ran the Howard Dean campaign in New York State. When Dean dropped out weeks before the New York primary, Geto found himself with thousands of volunteers who had nothing to do. Though many Deaniacs didn't know or care about local politics, Geto and others convinced some to put their energies into the WFP's nominees for state office. "A new generation of activists responded to that in New York: We have to build here," says Geto. "It's a way of supporting a national resurgence of the Democratic Party."

The experience of watching organized labor go all-out for John Kerry left John Murphy of Boston's Teamsters Local 122 wondering what else labor could do in states where it's strong (in Massachusetts, 28 percent of workers are in unions).

"How many times do we have to pour millions of dollars into the Democratic Party, and thousands of volunteers? And then hoping even if they win, we still have to get them to pay attention to us?" asks Murphy, who is a member of the Teamsters' executive board. He has become a leading advocate for fusion voting in Massachusetts.

"If we do nothing and hope to simply influence the Democratic Party, that's doomed to fail," says Murphy. "How many times do you have to lose before you make a change?" ■

MESSAGE: GOD LOVES YOU (IF YOU'RE CHRISTIAN)

Rick Warren, 'America's Pastor'

WENDY KAMINER

Appearing before a small group of journalists at a Pew Forum conference in May, bestselling preacher Rick Warren (*The Purpose-Driven Life*) presents himself as a working pastor with no aspirations to be a celebrity, who just happened to write a historic book: "When you write the best-selling book in the world for the last three years, that changes your life," he confides in passing. He gets "a lot of invitations to speak" and turns down many. He has chosen to address our small group "because I only speak to influencers.... I read all of your stuff all the time," he says in a hyperbolic appeal to our vanity. "Thank you for helping me grow."

TIM ROBINSON

Of course, Warren himself exerts immeasurable influence, as pastor of a mega-church (Saddleback Church in Orange County, California) and author of the pre-eminent religious self-help book and its spinoffs, including *The Purpose-Driven Church*, *Daily Inspiration for the Purpose-Driven Life* and *The Purpose-Driven Life Journal* (consisting largely of blank pages with inspirational prompts). Warren has been fairly characterized as the leader of a "purpose-driven movement" (for a sense of its scope, check out RickWarren.com). Ten percent of America's churches have engaged in "40 Days of Purpose" programs, Warren notes, which have "spread" to secular organizations, including sports teams and major corporations such as Ford, Wal-Mart and Coca-Cola, not to mention the military. According to the *New York Times*, a recent Air Force–sponsored "Spiritual Fitness Conference" offered US-based chaplains workshops based on the book.

The appeal of Warren's simple, inspirational message (God loves us and has a purpose for us all) is impressive, but the proliferation of seminars, workshops and sequels based on a bestselling book is hardly unprecedented. Warren's success follows the trajectory enjoyed in recent years by other inspirational, religious or spiritual self-help authors, like Deepak Chopra, Marianne Williams, John Bradshaw and Robert Bly. What distinguishes these mega-successes from books in the same genre that enjoy respectable sales at best is often not content but timing, marketing and luck (if not God's will).

Warren and his supporters would likely disagree; in their view, what distinguishes him from other inspirational writers is his rejection of self-centeredness and the ethic of self-gratification (as

Wendy Kaminer's latest book is Free for All: Defending Liberty in America Today *(Beacon). She is currently working on a book about ethics for Beacon Press.*

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well as his heralded decision to donate 90 percent of his royalties to the charitable work of his foundations and ministries). "This is not a self-help book," Warren announces in the opening chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, because it eschews belief in the primacy of the self and exhorts us to seek help and a sense of purpose from God: To discern your God-given purpose, study the Bible and focus on your relationship with Jesus. "If you don't have such a relationship, I will later explain how to begin one," Warren assures you.

His articles of faith and his anthropomorphic vision of God as Benevolent Despot are familiar: God loves us all and wants to be loved back. "God smiles when we love him supremely." God also wants to be trusted, obeyed "wholeheartedly," praised and thanked "continually." He does not want to be challenged: "The Bible says, 'What right have you, a human being, to cross-examine God?'" The usual incentives and disincentives prevail: Accept Jesus, on his terms, and be saved; reject him and suffer eternal damnation. Warren's tone isn't stern or scary: He focuses on the promise of salvation rather than its alternative, although he stresses that life is short.

We all share the same general purpose in life, Warren says: to glorify God. But God has given each of us particular gifts that will determine our particular path of service: "Because God loves variety and he wants us to be special, no single gift is given to everyone." If you're not happy with your gifts, take comfort in the knowledge that God knows best: "You should gratefully accept the way he has fashioned you." Warren exhorts us to use our allegedly God-given gifts faithfully and energetically but, quoting the Apostle Paul, only within a divinely circumscribed arena: "Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us."

Like many religious tracts, *The Purpose-Driven Life* offers great comfort, notably the promise of eternal life, to people who feel like losers in this life, which may partly explain its success. If you're poor, know that wealth can interfere with salvation: "Money has the greatest potential to replace God in your life." If you feel weak, know that "God has never been impressed with strength or self-sufficiency. In fact, he is drawn to people who are weak and admit it." If you feel inadequate, know that God "doesn't want you to worry about or covet abilities you don't have." Remember that suffering is purposeful: "God never wastes a hurt!"

Like many mass-market self-help books, *The Purpose-Driven Life* is upbeat, at least as accessible as a junior high school text and replete with aphorisms and acronyms. (Your "custom combination of capabilities is called your SHAPE: Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experience.") Warren tells his readers how to use his book as "a guide to a 40-day spiritual journey." His book is divided into forty chapters, and you're supposed to read one per day. Each chapter ends helpfully with a simple "Point to Ponder," a Bible "Verse to Remember" and a "Question to Consider."

Do I sound like a snarky, secular elitist? Perhaps. Inspirational books are easily derided by those whom they leave uninspired. But both secularists and religious liberals should respect and fear the movement reflected by this book's success. Warren looks for-

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July 27 marks the 52nd anniversary of the Korean War Armistice Day. And September 8 will mark the 60th anniversary of landing of U.S. forces in Korea. Much time has passed, but **the U.S. is still fighting the longest, undeclared war in history in Korea,** with some 35,000 troops still stationed in South Korea today. It is high time for us to end this lingering, costly war, and bring our troops home.

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ward to yet another Great Awakening in America (and perhaps the world) and even a Second Reformation, fueled partly by a new partnership between evangelical Protestants and Catholics. His optimism is not unfounded. The "Protestantization" of American Catholics, described by Alan Wolfe in *The Transformation of American Religion*, was demonstrated in the 2004 elections. Wolfe aptly admonishes liberals not to stereotype religious conservatives as close-minded extremists, noting that even conservative religious traditions are tempered by popular culture (the personal development movement, in particular, has had a marked effect across denominations). But if the absolute number of religious extremists in America is small, they enjoy disproportionate political power. That's why Rick Santorum remains in the Senate leadership while Tom Daschle has retired to private life, having been successfully opposed by the Catholic Church.

Rick Warren has played an important role in our latest passion play. So far he has shunned the political stage and claims he wants to be a pastor, not a "policymaker"; but he expresses frustration that the usual suspects, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, are still considered leaders of the evangelical movement (at least by the mainstream press). He cites "egocentric leadership" as our "number two" global problem and seems poised to try providing an alternative model of "servant leadership." *Time* has named him "America's pastor," he informs us, in the course of denying any interest in the title. Warren is mentioned as a successor to the ailing Billy Graham, and it's not hard to imagine him modestly accepting the mantle of America's leading evangelist.

What sort of leadership might Warren provide? He disassociates himself from the religious right, noting that he shares its position on social issues but doesn't want to focus on them. He focuses on poverty, disease and aid to Africa. But if Warren is part of a "new leadership cohort," as *New York Times* columnist David Brooks suggests, he sometimes sounds like a member of the old one. Lamenting the "tyranny of activist judges," who obstruct the will of the majority, he evinces no understanding of minority rights or the judiciary's role in enforcing them. Explaining his views about homosexuality and gay rights, he notes, "I don't think that homosexuality is the worst sin," and, "By the way, my wife and I had dinner at a gay couple's home two weeks ago. So I'm not [a] homophobic guy, okay?"

Warren's desire to avoid discussions of issues like abortion, stem cell research and gay rights seems genuine, and is obviously wise. His success derives in part from his focus on crusades that unite people—the alleviation of global poverty and disease. But his faith (like that of others) is inherently divisive. At the end of the day, God is a divider, not a uniter: Non-Christians, however devout, go to hell, along with nonbelievers, whom Warren regards, quite conventionally, as overcome by existential angst and essentially amoral. Without God, "life would have no purpose or meaning," he asserts. "There would be no right or wrong."

Whether or not another Great Awakening extends "meaning" and eternal life to the converted, it will have profound temporal ramifications for the rest of us (for whom the temporal realm continues to matter). Religious convictions, like other deeply held moral codes, provide both the courage to resist repression and the impulse to impose it. How will secularism and religious freedom fare if evangelical Christians become a predominant political force? What are the prospects of equal citizenship for those of us damned by our refusal to be born again in Christ? Should law reflect Christian notions of morality? Warren does not say.

If Warren's desire to save souls is luminescent, his political aspirations and notions of liberty are unclear. America's pastor says he is a pluralist, with apparent sincerity. But it is unrealistic to expect people who believe that salvation requires embracing Christ to accept secular laws and practices that defy what they consider His teachings. From their perspective, your liberty may be the least of what's at stake. People who respect your right to go to hell may have little regard for laws that tempt their children to go with you. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
error of confusing a geographic region with a political entity. "America" is one thing, the "United States," which is to say the republic that came into being in 1775–89, quite another. While the first suffered from no shortage of racism, it did not necessarily follow that the second would grow more racist over time or that it would eventually emerge as the most powerful slave republic since ancient Rome.

This, to a considerable extent, was Jefferson's doing. More than anyone else, he helped structure the new Republic as a *herrenvolk* democracy in which freedom would accrue only to those with white skin. The effect was to encourage citizens to assert themselves democratically by asserting their whiteness, which is why periods of radical ferment like the Jacksonian era were also periods of rising racism. Jefferson was the chief architect of this topsy-turvy system.

So, yes, I think we can fairly say that he "passed on" his racism to the nation as a whole, provided that "nation" is understood in the political sense rather than the merely cultural or geographic. DANIEL LAZARE

OPRAH, SPARE OUR LILY-WHITE SKIN!

Biddeford, Me.

■ Re J.M. Tyree's essay about Oprah Winfrey's Book Club embarking on "A Summer of Faulkner" ["As I Lay Reading," Aug. 1/8]: Faulkner is dangerous beach reading. One summer, while attentively rapt in the vortex that is *Absalom, Absalom!*, I neglected to move my body in the hot Cape Cod sun. Upon returning to the cottage, I discovered that I was sunburned down half of my face, chest and lower body. Read Faulkner by all means, but use sunscreen—and turn from time to time.
RICHARD G. SOSSEL

OOGUM BOOGUM BOOBOO

Brockton, Mass.

■ I'd like to offer a correction to Susan Straight's excellent essay "Even" [Aug. 15/22]. Toward the end of the piece Straight mentions three soul songs from the late 1960s–early '70s. "The Oogum Boogum Song" was recorded by Brenton Wood, not Brook Benton. Benton, while soulful, would not have attempted anything so funky. Also, readers may be interested to know that "Thin Line Between Love & Hate" was by The Persuaders and "Only the Strong Survive" by Jerry Butler. PAUL DEROGATIS

AND ANOTHER BOOBOO...

■ In Eric Alterman's August 15/22 "The Liberal Media" column, it should have said that *Slate* editor Jacob Weisberg complained that James Wolcott's book (not Graydon Carter's) offered a "free pass" to liberal commentators.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Patriotic Bore

DANIEL LAZARE

THE UNKNOWN AMERICAN REVOLUTION: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America.
By Gary B. Nash.
Viking. 512 pp. $27.95.

THOMAS PAINE AND THE PROMISE OF AMERICA.
By Harvey J. Kaye.
Hill and Wang. 326 pp. $25.

1776.
By David McCullough.
Simon & Schuster. 386 pp. $32.

Although undoubtedly one of the most glorious events in history, the American Revolution was also a bloody mess. It gave rise to a war that raged for fully half a dozen years, claiming the life of one colonist in a hundred. Proportionally speaking, it generated five times as many political exiles per capita as the French Revolution and saw roughly the same amount of revolutionary confiscations of private property. But if anyone questions whether it was worth it, he or she need only take a look at political conditions north of the border. Canada, where most of America's counterrevolutionary émigrés wound up, is today an increasingly authoritarian society in which elections are stolen, political corruption is rampant and religious fundamentalists hurl thunderbolts while liberals scurry for cover. Thanks to its infinitely more progressive foundations, the United States is the opposite—a sunny, relaxed social democracy admired the world over for its humane attitudes and nonviolent ways.

Er, perhaps we ought to take this once more from the top.

If the American Revolution was the first liberal democratic revolution in history, how is it that the republic it spawned has been so consistently illiberal and undemocratic? Contrary to what you may have read in this publication and others, the problem did not begin with George W. Bush or even Richard Nixon. Rather, the most striking thing about liberalism over the *longue durée* of US history has been its persistent weakness rather than its strength. Progressives like to dwell on the high points—the Civil War, the New Deal, the movements for social justice of the 1950s and '60s. But they forget the long sloughs of despond in between, periods in which abolitionists could barely show their face without being beaten or killed; leftists were repressed with Mussolini-like thoroughness; and hysterical crusades against sex, alcohol and drugs followed one another in rapid succession. True, liberalism did have its moment in the sun for a few decades following the New Deal. But since the great breakdown of the 1960s, liberals have increasingly reverted to their default mode of pessimism and despair.

Liberal historians have succumbed to the country's celebratory mood, praising an American Revolution that never was.

The "democratic deficit" between the United States on the one hand and Canada and Western Europe on the other thus continues to expand nearly as rapidly as the current-account deficit. This alone would suggest that America's democratic foundations are not as sturdy as they've been made out to be and that our great founding moment—1776 and all that—deserves a much-belated second look. But the historians, at least those who show up regularly on the bestseller lists, do not agree. While some have turned out tough-minded works, the mood in general has turned soft and celebratory. Instead of careful dissections, they have given us giddy tomes trumpeting "the radicalism of the American Revolution"—not to mention the ineffable genius of a seemingly endless parade of Founding Fathers, from

Daniel Lazare is the author, most recently, of The Velvet Coup: The Constitution, the Supreme Court, and the Decline of American Democracy *(Verso). He is currently at work on a book about the politics of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.*

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George Washington to Gouverneur Morris and other backbenchers. Although one might expect liberal historians to buck the trend toward filiopietism, they seem intent on serving up an alternative version of the national mythology, one emphasizing the role of slaves, indebted farmers, rebellious housewives, etc. But while they disagree about the factors that have made America so great, they don't quarrel with the assumption of American greatness. Post-9/11, we are all patriots now, liberals no less than conservatives.

Gary Nash's *The Unknown American Revolution* and Harvey Kaye's *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* are examples of this sort of progressive me-too-ism, while David McCullough's *1776* epitomizes the kind of historiography that in today's nationalistic climate sells like hot cakes. Nash's book is the most ambitious of the three, the most well-intentioned and therefore the most disappointing. Rather than focusing on the immediate break with Great Britain, he takes a long view of the American Revolution as a social process unfolding over decades. By the 1740s, he notes, conditions in British North America were growing more and more turbulent. In New Jersey, farmers were up in arms over conflicting land titles issued some eight decades earlier by both the Dutch West India Company and James, Duke of York, brother of King Charles II. In Boston, mobs took to the streets in response to the Royal Navy's habit of sending ashore press gangs to kidnap local workingmen to fill out depleted crews, while a few years later angry Scotch-Irish settlers from western Pennsylvania marched on Quaker-dominated Philadelphia to complain that the provincial government was not doing enough to protect them from the ravages of wild Indians (pausing en route to slaughter and mutilate "twenty Christianized and entirely peaceable Conestoga Indians," Nash notes, just to show they weren't kidding).

Why the ill temper? Although Nash does not dwell on the whys and wherefores, it's clear that the colonies, growing by leaps and bounds, were rapidly outstripping haphazard governing arrangements that had taken shape in the previous century. Lines of authority were tangled, rights and responsibilities were uncertain and in dispute, while parliamentary law coexisted uneasily with homegrown law issuing forth from thirteen colonial legislatures and countless town meetings. The upshot was a chaotic structure that would have broken down even if the authorities had done nothing. But with British finances under stress due to the unprecedented cost of the Seven Years' War of 1756-63, London decided that a crackdown was overdue. Casting aside precedent, Parliament imposed a series of taxes that seemed to confirm the colonists' worst fears about the direction of British policy. Sniffing "the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze," as Edmund Burke put it, the Americans grew convinced that their most basic rights were being snatched away. In short order, Committees of Correspondence were forming up and down the Atlantic Seaboard while farmers and laborers were drilling in countless town squares.

This we know from our history books. What we don't know, but which Nash makes amply clear, is that a highly fragmented political structure fostered a highly fragmented and contradictory response. In Boston, events unfolded along classic bourgeois-revolutionary lines, with virtually the entire population, from merchants right down to laborers and nearby farmers, standing shoulder to shoulder against the imperial authorities and a narrow coterie of their upper-class supporters. But as one headed toward the West

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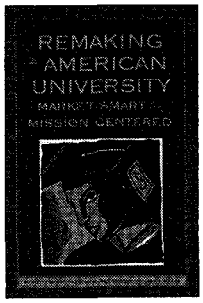

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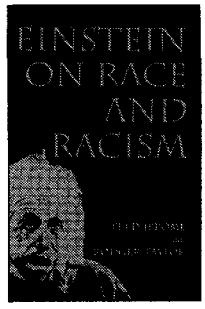

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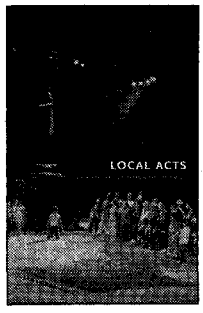

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and South, conditions grew confused. In New York's Hudson Valley, where a quasi-feudal system of land tenure had taken root in the seventeenth century, tenants were in a state of perennial revolt against their aristocratic landlords. When they learned that such Hudson Valley grandees as John Van Cortlandt and Robert Livingston, the holder of some 160,000 acres, were enlisting in the patriot cause, they immediately declared in favor of the British. Along Maryland's Eastern Shore, where an upper-class officer in the patriotic militia was heard to declare that "no poor man was entitled to a vote, and those that would insist upon voting...should be put to death," impoverished farmers did likewise. So did many Regulators, a group of farmers in the North Carolina highlands who had risen in revolt in the 1760s against regressive taxes imposed by a self-aggrandizing Tidewater elite. If the big planters were supporting independence, they figured that was reason enough for them to support the Loyalists.

Instead of supporting the revolution, many of the most downtrodden members of society thus opposed it. As odd as this was, two additional factors made it even worse. One involved the Indians. Besieged by land-hungry settlers who regarded treaties as meaningless formalities, they saw the British as the only force remotely capable of holding the colonists back and sided with them as well. In April 1774, right around the time that Thomas Jefferson was meeting with other members of the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg to establish a Committee of Correspondence, a group of Virginia frontiersmen seized a Shawnee canoe floating down the Ohio River and not only killed and scalped all nine women aboard but, tearing open the womb of one of them, extracted a near-term child and stuck it "on a pole." The Shawnee took thirteen white scalps in retaliation and put thousands of families to flight. In late 1776 an Indian leader named Joseph Brant began recruiting Mohawk and Oneida warriors to fight against the colonists, and in July 1777 he managed to convince some 700 Iroquois to join him in an attack on Fort Stanwix, the westernmost American outpost in the Mohawk River Valley. Before long, the entire western frontier was ablaze. Instead of a neat and simple power struggle between patriots and Tories, America was the scene of a chaotic conflict between and among upper-class merchants and planters, British soldiers, poor farmers, urban laborers and frontier

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patriots (whom Nash describes as "deep-dyed Indian haters"), not to mention the Indians themselves.

A second factor, of course, had to do with the slaves, some 600,000 of them, mostly in the South but some as far north as New England. In 1774 an alarmed Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John, about a plot among local slaves to send a letter to the royal governor offering to "fight for him provided he would arm them and engage to liberate them if he conquered." In November 1775 Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, returned the favor by offering freedom to any slave willing to bear arms in defense of "His Majesty's crown and dignity." Before long, slaves were fleeing to British lines by the hundreds. Running away was as risky in the 1770s as it would be in the years leading up to the Civil War. When white patriots caught up with a group of about forty runaways in North Carolina, they killed one and whipped and cut off the ears of a number of others. In South Carolina, patriots hung and then burned at the stake a free black man known only as Jeremiah, whom they accused of offering to pilot Royal Navy vessels over the sandbar blocking the entrance to Charleston harbor. Punishments like these were designed to keep blacks in their place, but by mid-1776, according to Nash, the stream of runaways had "turned into a torrent." It was nothing less, he writes, than "the greatest slave rebellion in American history." Yet it was a rebellion against the rebellion, rather as if the Hebrews had rebelled against Moses and fled back into the arms of the pharaoh.

What are we to make of this? Can a revolution opposed by society's most oppressed sectors be described as a revolution at all? Was the patriot cause nothing more than a war of secession on the part of a group of breakaway British provinces, or perhaps a barbarian invasion by Anglo-Celtic settlers determined to throw off all restraint so that they could pillage and plunder the continent all the more effectively? Were the revolutionaries out to create a new order or merely to restore a status quo ante based on slavery, low taxes and, outside New England, a nearly total absence of government control? "I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived thereby that I was founding a land of slavery," declared the Marquis de Lafayette in the 1790s. Perhaps the most important legacy of 1776 was the bad taste it left in people's mouths when, by the early 1800s, increasing numbers of them woke up to the fact that they had accomplished the opposite of what they had set out to achieve.

Issues like these are no less relevant today than they were two centuries ago. Indeed, given the way the revolution seems to loom ever larger over American society, they may be even more relevant. Unfortunately, however, this is where

Can a revolution opposed by a society's most oppressed sectors, like the American Revolution, be described as a revolution?

Nash completely loses his way. Rather than tackling such questions head on, he retreats behind a smokescreen of liberal patriotic piety. Complaining of a truncated historical view that has blinded Americans to the role of blacks, artisans and others, he writes that all too "little is known...of Thomas Peters, an African-born slave who made his personal declaration of independence in early 1776, [and] fought for the freedom of African Americans" or of "Dragging Canoe, the Cherokee warrior who made the American Revolution into a two-decade life-sapping fight for his people's life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness." Both, Nash contends, were part of the revolutionary process. But Thomas Peters, who fled with his family to British lines, and Dragging Canoe, who sided with the British on the western frontier, opposed the revolution. Making them part of a political process they tried to resist not only strains logic but does their legacy a disservice. It involves a political sleight of hand little different, in the final analysis, from the sleight of hand of an earlier era that caused women, laborers and people of color to disappear from the historical annals altogether.

Somehow, an "unruly birth of democracy," to quote from Nash's subtitle, seems inadequate as a description of the mad farrago of warring elements that emerged in 1775–76. *The Unknown American Revolution* suffers from the besetting sin of American historiography and American political thought in general: extreme tunnel vision. It is astonishing—or, rather, it would be astonishing if we weren't already so used to it—that Nash, a professor at UCLA, can write an entire book seeking to recast our understanding of the revolution with barely a nod to the global events of which the American struggle for independence was merely a part. If he had cast a wider net, he might have been able to make better sense of his subject. After all, strange inversions of the type that took place in the Hudson Valley or the North Carolina highlands were common in other countries in "the age of the democratic revolution," as the historian Robert Palmer termed it. In Haiti, slave owners supported the French Revolution, while the slaves who rose in revolt in 1791 did so in the name of the king. Only when the French outlawed slavery in February 1794 did they declare themselves *plus Jacobin que les Jacobins*. In England, the slum dwellers were royalist, while radicals tended to come from the entrepreneurial middle class. Indeed, in France itself, ground zero for the democratic revolution, most radicals were royalist on the grounds that Louis XVI was settling nicely into his role as a dutiful constitutional monarch. Only when the king tried to flee to Austrian lines in June 1791 did they begin to reconsider. Revolutions sometimes take a long time to sort themselves out, although the American Revolution, such as it was, has certainly taken longer than most.

Where *The Unknown American Revolution* surrenders to patriotic piety, Harvey Kaye's *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* fairly wallows in it. Kaye neatly sums up in a single sentence in the introduction his concept of how his hero has helped mold American character. "Endowing American experience with democratic impulses and aspirations," he writes, "Paine...turned Americans into radicals—and we have remained radicals at heart ever since." Radicals? A nation of overweight, SUV-driving mall addicts? Still, bizarre as that sentence may be, it's not entirely nonsensical—if, that is, we understand "radical" to mean messianic, apocalyptic or moralistic. If so, then yes, we can say that in some sense the American personality retains a radical edge. It is why the United States is forever embarking on wars and crusades, making itself more unpopular even than Britain at the height of the empire. But it seems unfair to hang it all on poor Tom Paine, a stubborn and cantankerous freethinker who was mostly a pretty likable sort, even if he did get in over his head in the 1790s.

Paine was a brilliant wordsmith, and for Kaye, a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay, tracing his legacy consists mostly of tallying up the number of times famous Americans have echoed his phrases. "Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered," "These are the

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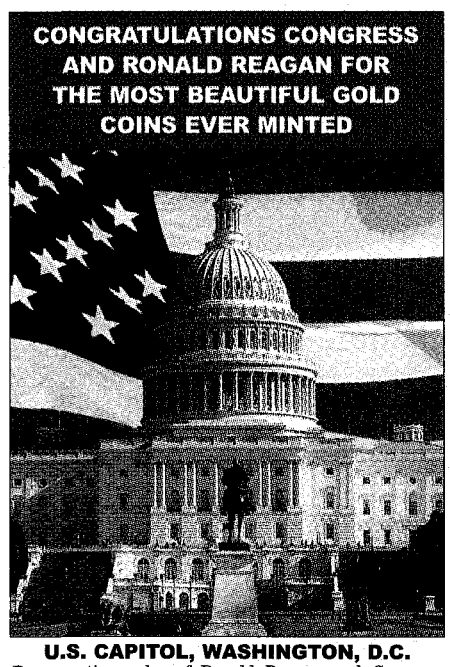

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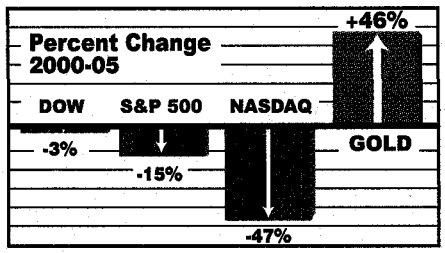

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times that try men's souls," "My country is the world," "crowned ruffians"—when it comes to Paine, we are like the man who has been quoting Shakespeare all his life without ever knowing it. But the question of Paine's political or ideological legacy is another matter. Even though he thundered against George III, he is also famous for asserting that "government even in its best state is but a necessary evil," a sentiment that has endeared him to the Newt Gingriches of the world ever since. As Eric Foner showed in his perceptive 1976 study *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, Paine represented a fleeting political type, the Anglo-Saxon radical artisan of the late 1700s. A voracious reader who was trained as a corset-maker at a time when Edmund Burke was declaring that such "servile employments" could not be "a matter of honor to any person," he was both a republican and a libertarian with a visceral loathing of aristocrats and kings. While one might think this would have made him feel right at home in Philadelphia when he moved there in 1774, the ideological mix of the New World was in fact somewhat different. Where English radical artisans were urban, radical republicanism in America tended toward the agrarian, hostile to cities, banks and centralized government, all of which Paine supported. While his famous pamphlet *Common Sense* helped ignite a revolution, by the 1780s he found himself more and more at odds with his fellow radicals and fed up with politics in general.

Nonetheless, after sailing to England in a vain effort to interest investors in a new type of iron bridge, he was drawn back in. The occasion was Burke's famous broadside *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in November 1790. Outraged that Burke, who had distinguished himself in parliaments as a friend of the American Revolution, would attack the French for seeking to accomplish the same goals, Paine fired back with a pamphlet of his own. Titled *The Rights of Man* and written with his usual panache, it sold 50,000 copies within a matter of weeks and made its author one of the most famous men of his age. But something about Paine's counterattack did not augur well for the second stage of his political career. Where he looked upon one revolution as merely the continuation of the other, Burke, more perceptively, saw that this time things would be different. And indeed they were. Where the Americans never went beyond dismantling parliamentary sovereignty, the French quickly set about creating a new sovereignty even more awesome and peremptory than the old. As a result, after fleeing to France in September 1792 one step ahead of the British police, Paine found himself in uncharted waters. Foner (but not Kaye) notes that Paine, speaking little French, had barely any contact with the sans-culottes, the laborers, artisans and shopkeepers who were the most militant element in the revolution and who should have been his natural constituency. Instead, he fell in with a group of America-admiring luminaries such as Jacques Brissot and Georges Danton, who were emerging as the conservative opposition to the faction headed by Robespierre. Opposed to price controls when they were imposed in Philadelphia in the 1770s, Paine had no sympathy when radicals demanded the same in Paris in 1793. Elected to the National Convention, he delivered an eloquent speech (read by an interpreter) opposing execution of the man known since his arrest simply as Louis Capet. The speech aroused radical suspicions all the more. Paine was arrested on Christmas Eve and was nearly guillotined the following July. Ultimately, the only thing that saved him was the downfall of Robespierre a scant three days later.

A sanitized revolutionary, Tom Paine is now an all-American hero, admired by everyone from Ted Kennedy to Jesse Helms.

Depending on one's point of view, Paine's arrest and near execution were either an example of how the French Revolution, in terms of political radicalism, left its American predecessor in the dust or an illustration of how French rationalists, lacking that healthy Anglo-American instinct for moderation and compromise, took matters too far and wound up ruining everything. But Kaye does not address such issues. All he is concerned with is establishing Paine as an authentic American hero admired by both the left and the right. Where Theodore Roosevelt once dismissed him as a "filthy little atheist," nowadays everyone from Ted Kennedy to Jesse Helms lauds his contribution to the American struggle for independence, while Christopher Hitchens, Alan Dershowitz and Howard Dean all sing his praises. "Left and right alike have depicted Paine as an opponent of the concentration of power and authority," Kaye writes, although he adds that where the left likes to think of him as an opponent of corporate power, the right prefers to believe that it is federal power he would oppose.

But is there any reason why we should care which side Tom Paine would be on any more than, say, Davy Crockett? If Paine was at sea by the late eighteenth century, is there any reason to suppose he'd be any less so by the early twenty-first? It never seems to occur to Kaye that if Kennedy and Helms agree on something, it is not a reason to take heart. In this instance, it is not an indication of how much things have improved but how much they've deteriorated from the good old days when fading memories of an aging radical could still set the ruling class's teeth on edge. If that is no longer the case, it is an indication of how fossilized the American revolutionary tradition has become. The more Americans celebrate the revolution, the less they think about all the things that made it so disturbing.

David McCullough's *1776* is a further sign of fossilization, not to mention the modern arts of packaging and commodification. Where Nash takes the long view, McCullough takes the short, restricting himself to a single calendar year and little more. Where Nash paints a picture of American society as a whole, McCullough zeroes in on a single individual—General Washington. The upshot is far from bad, however. Though McCullough's prose is anything but stylish, it's sturdy enough, and he has a novelist's sense of structure and pacing. Moreover, the choice of 1776 is a clever one. Not only is it a famous date, but it represented a roller-coaster ride in terms of American military fortunes. The year began on a high note when General Henry Knox, taking advantage of the severe winter weather, used barges and sledges to transport some sixty tons of mortars and cannon down from Fort Ticonderoga in northern New York and across the frozen Massachusetts countryside. Working frantically in the dead of night, Washington's troops succeeded in placing the artillery atop Dorchester Heights, overlooking Boston Harbor, in early March. Although the British controlled the city, they were cruelly exposed and had little choice but to withdraw.

This was a political triumph of the first order. But then, when Washington marched his troops to engage the British in New York, he met with disaster. New York Harbor is much bigger than Boston

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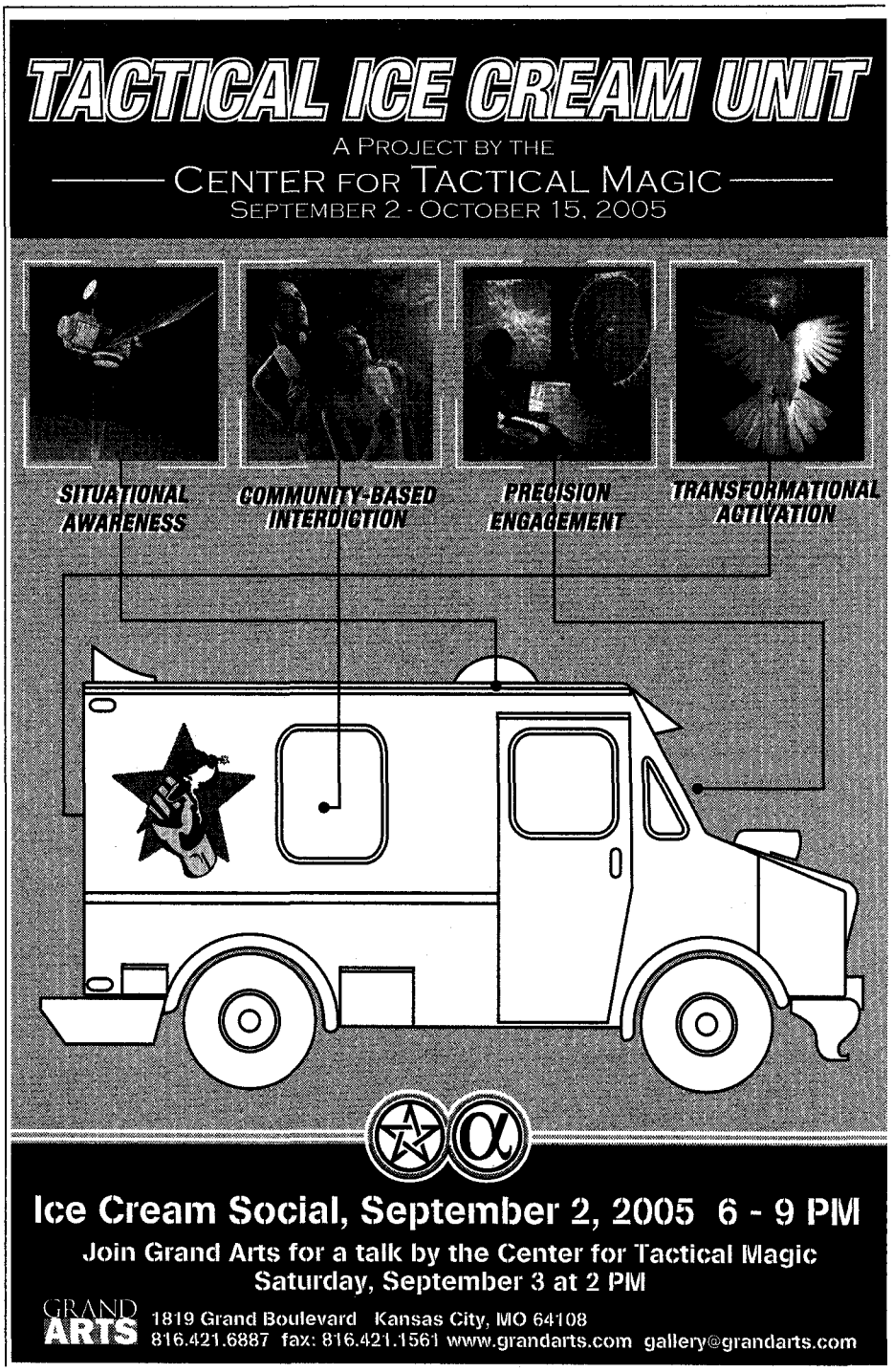
Harbor and consequently far more difficult to dominate. The advantage passed to those able to control waterways like the Hudson and the East River, which in this instance meant the Royal Navy. With his troops ensconced on Manhattan Island, Washington watched while British ships, hugging the far side of the Hudson, sailed effortlessly past. He made matters worse by ferrying several thousand troops across the East River to Brooklyn to head off a British invasion of Long Island and then compounded his error by sending in 1,200 reinforcements when the Americans found themselves hemmed in along the waterfront. Only a Dunkirk-style seaborne rescue on the night of August 29–30 enabled him to transport his troops back to Manhattan and avert catastrophe.

More engagements followed at Harlem Heights, at White Plains, back in Manhattan at Fort Washington and then finally at Fort Lee, which the Americans abandoned in late November without a fight. With winter closing in, Washington's "shadow army," as one of his fellow generals called it, limped through the New Jersey countryside, its ranks depleted by mass desertions. On December 1, 2,000 troops, their enlistments up, simply walked away. The war seemed all but over.

But then, on December 25, Washington ferried his troops back across the Delaware River from the Pennsylvania side, where they had taken refuge, and marched them nine miles through rain, snow and hail to Trenton, where a Hessian force had settled in for the Christmas holiday. Seemingly everything that could go wrong with the operation did. Two of the three units failed to cross the Delaware due to the raging storm, leaving Washington and some 2,400 troops to carry on alone. Informed that the American guns were too soaked to fire, Washington grimly ordered his men to use bayonets. Breaking into a run as they entered the village, the Americans struck at 8 in the morning. After forty-five minutes of wild house-to-house fighting, they were victorious. Twenty-one Hessians were killed, ninety were wounded and approximately 900 were taken prisoner, while some 500 managed to escape. Incredibly, no Americans died and only four were wounded. It was just the triumph that Washington had been hoping for, one that proved the British would be denied a quick victory and that the war would drag on for a good deal longer.

It's a ripping yarn that McCullough tells extremely well. But the political strategy behind it is not difficult to discern. The story is filled with ups and downs, and McCullough, who is no Parson Weems, presents Washington not only as someone with more than his share of flaws but as a military amateur who was plainly out-generaled by his British opponents. But that is the point. By reducing the story to its bare military essentials, he manages to shear away all the messy and troubling political details. And by showing the depths to which American fortunes had fallen by mid-November, he makes the victory in Trenton seem all the more stirring. American heroism is affirmed yet again. "We have to value what our forebears—and not just in the eighteenth century, but our own parents and grandparents—did for us, or we're not going to take it very seriously, and it can slip away." So McCullough told a conference recently hosted by Hillsdale College, an ultra-right-wing private institution based in Michigan. In other words, the purpose of history is to conserve the good things done for us in the past so that we can prepare ourselves for the trials and tasks that still lie ahead. This is history as a form of national rearmament, which is why it fits in so well with the embattled national mood. ■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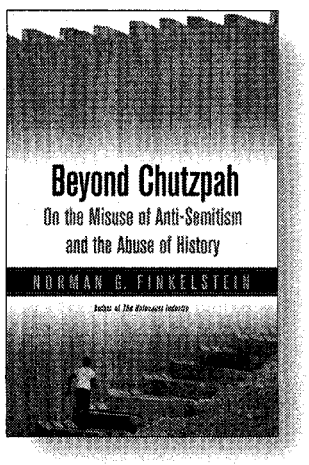

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It's a Man's, Man's World

WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN.
By Cormac McCarthy. Knopf. 309 pp. $24.95.

You'd be forgiven for thinking of Cormac McCarthy's slim, disillusioned new novel, with its suggestively self-referential title, as the 72-year-old writer's farewell to fiction. You'd also be forgiven for hoping it was. It's not that *No Country for Old Men*—taut, savage, headlong—isn't first-rate by ordinary standards, but by the standards of McCarthy's previous work, which has established him as one of America's greatest living writers, it is superficial and perfunctory. The moral intensity remains; the imaginative complexity is gone. *No Country for Old Men*, whose streamlined, cinematic plot is compressed into some 300 short pages, is McCarthy's first novel in the seven years since he closed the Border Trilogy with *Cities of the Plain.* Though he is said to have three or four other works in various states of composition, he seems to have run out of patience with the majestic, processional prose and slow sifting of existential questions that gave his earlier work its weight. McCarthy has long attracted comparison with Faulkner, Hemingway and Melville, but in the shape his career has assumed of late he reminds me most of Evelyn Waugh, another unrelenting Catholic moralist who, as he aged, declined first into sentimentality, then into certainty.

Whether McCarthy remains a practicing Catholic is not known (he is famously jealous of biographical detail), but he had a Catholic upbringing, and his work is driven by a Catholic sense of sin and evil. This is not to say that his novels articulate an identifiable theology. While they are obsessed with good and evil, sin and suffering, fate and death, their imaginative power and philosophical depth are founded on the agonized perplexity with which they approach such questions. Call it Catholicism minus revelation. McCarthy has a hundred ways of describing a sunset, but this signature image isn't deployed for mere decoration. Darkness is his master metaphor, the nightly reminder of our indefeasible ignorance. Daylight, knowledge and life are alike the briefest of intrusions on an eternal abyss. So while his work is saturated with religious emotion, it asserts no belief in God, redemption, heaven or hell, only in what the world of experience, he suggests, incessantly demonstrates: the wickedness of human nature and the overwhelming power of evil. Goodness exists in McCarthy's world, and it is beautiful, but it is also innocent, fragile and weak. Goodness exists, but only where evil has yet to hunt it out.

It's no accident that McCarthy moved to the Southwestern desert, some thirty years ago, from his native Tennessee. If the urbane Waugh's mode of denouncing human depravity was satiric, the ascetic McCarthy's is prophetic, and the wilderness has always been the locus of prophecy, the place where the chatter of civilization dies away and inhuman presences—or absences—become discernible in wind and stone. Among his contemporaries, McCarthy comes closest in sensibility to J.M. Coetzee, whose own ascetic refusal, equally sulphurous in its rejection of modernity, bespeaks the bleakness of the South African veld.

But where Coetzee's style is mercilessly spare, McCarthy's is formal and orotund and cadenced. It is also supremely audacious, biblical not only in its rhythms but in the right it claims to speak of the highest things in the highest language. No one since Faulkner has attempted this kind of thing, but McCarthy's daring surpasses even his master's, for his authorial voice seems designed to fill the place of an absent God. Its characteristic march of syntactic units ("and...and...and") bespeaks the inexorability of fate, but it also functions as a kind of ritual, blessing even the smallest events with supreme seriousness by affirming the indelibility of their existence: This is true and this is true and this is true. Whatever the horrors McCarthy describes—and his novels are the bloodiest in serious fiction—they are redeemed from meaninglessness just by being described. In a world of ephemera, his style aspires

William Deresiewicz teaches English at Yale. His book Jane Austen and the Romantic Poets *came out earlier this year.*

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to the permanence of characters chiseled in stone.

But to speak of only one style in McCarthy's writing is misleading. Set against the lofty rhetoric of his narrators is his characters' plain, bluff talk. With a perfect ear, McCarthy transcribes the gruff and laconic but somehow marvelously resonant vernaculars of his cowboys, misfits and desperados in snatches of dialogue that sit within the expanse of his prose like a campfire on a vast plain. The two voices, narrator's and characters', are as remote as heaven and earth, and their juxtaposition enacts the relationship between God and man. Simple souls, oblivious to the enormous meanings their actions entrain, are held within the merciless hand of an all-seeing, all-judging providence. It is a rhetorical high-wire act that risks falling into bathos at every moment—you almost can't believe you're taking this sermonizing seriously—but McCarthy carries it off by sheer artistic authority.

Still, in the Border Trilogy the act starts to slip. All of a sudden we encounter tonalities that would have been unthinkable in McCarthy's earlier work: romance, heroism, nostalgia, the glamour of youth. It's no wonder that these were the books that, starting with *All the Pretty Horses* (which became a Hollywood movie), brought him popular success to go along with his critical esteem. I'm not suggesting he sold out his vision for commercial advantage; no one has been more disdainful of money or fashion than McCarthy. If I had to guess, I'd say it was a matter of age. McCarthy was 58 when the trilogy began to appear. His heroes, at least in the first two volumes, are 16. John Grady Cole, hero of both the first and third (where he's still only 20) was born almost the same year as McCarthy himself. The trilogy, which is drenched in yearning for the old days of the cowboy, is also McCarthy's sentimentalization of youth, and of the years of his youth. It is his equivalent of *Brideshead Revisited*, in which an aging Waugh went all soft over Oxford and the English aristocracy.

The trilogy's heroes are manly and beautiful and doomed. Their love affairs—with willful heiresses and star-crossed prostitutes—are pure but thwarted. Cowboy life is one long parade of simple, rough-hewn virtues. It's funny, because the novel that immediately precedes the trilogy is the almost unreadably horrifying *Blood Meridian*, where the conquest of the same territory, by the same sort of people, is a saga of satanic

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cruelty and greed. But McCarthy grants his golden cowboys a special exemption from both the history of their own land and the universal depravity of human nature. What's more, this time around he places his metaphysical pronouncements not in the mouths of his narrators but in those of a series of simple but incredibly wise old Mexicans. If a liberal idealized the lowly and dark-skinned like this, he'd be derided as a sentimentalist, and there's no reason to see such gestures any differently when made by a conservative, especially one who is well-born (McCarthy's father was a prominent Knoxville attorney) and foreign to the life he portrays. The trilogy is brilliant in many ways, but it is also embarrassing, an intellectual rhapsodizing about a pack of roughnecks.

There's certainly nothing sentimental about the new novel. Its opening pages quickly introduce its three principal figures: Llewelyn Moss, a decent but flawed man who goes on the lam after finding a briefcase full of cash at the scene of a drug-related killing near the Mexican border; Anton Chigurh, the hired killer tracking him down; and Ed Tom Bell, the local sheriff trying to find Moss before Chigurh does. To call Chigurh a hired killer, though, is like calling Idi Amin a politician. What he really is is a monster, something both more and less than human. Some people he kills just on principle, some just for practice, all with implacable efficiency. His favorite weapon is a bolt-gun, like the kind they use in slaughterhouses, and he is without pity or weakness and accountable to no one. He is perhaps the most terrifying figure in American fiction—even now, weeks after I read the book, I can scarcely write his name without looking over my shoulder—though admittedly most of his rivals for that honor come from McCarthy's own *oeuvre*. Indeed, he recalls the Judge in *Blood Meridian*, one of McCarthy's greatest creations. Like the Judge (and like the Devil, who seems to have sent them both), Chigurh is at once evil's most extreme face and its greatest scourge—in Sheriff Bell's words, "a true and living prophet of destruction." He is human wickedness turned back against itself.

No Country for Old Men is not Chigurh's story, though, nor, as it seems at first, is it Moss's. It is Bell's, for it is Bell who provides the framing commentary for the novel's relentlessly bloody events, and it is the effect of those events on his understanding of himself and the world that is the novel's ultimate subject. Bell speaks to us between chapters, and while the chapters themselves are narrated in the third person, the narrative style is nothing like what we expect from McCarthy, offering only the barest and swiftest notation of events: no high rhetoric, no grand ideas. The quasi-divine intelligence that normally governs his novels has withdrawn, leaving us, like Bell, adrift in a world devoid of meaning. The willingness to care for other creatures, whether human or animal, is the standard of goodness in McCarthy's world. But now (the novel is set in 1980), after many years of looking after the tiny population of his Texas county like a stern but benevolent father, Bell feels impotent before the unprecedented violence of the new drug economy. He is aging, like his creator, and discovers that the place where time has brought him is no country for old men.

As the novel nears its end, however, Bell's very doubts about the value of his life's work become the excuse for an affirmation of timeworn verities: the endurance of truth, the existence of God, the nihilism of unbelief, the goodness of the old ways. The sheriff is clearly McCarthy's mouthpiece here, and so we find the erstwhile apostle of ignorance giving us chapter and verse about what to believe and how. Waugh finally came to this kind of tub-thumping certainty, too. And the trilogy's historical problem also resurfaces. What Bell is confronting, we're told again and again, is a new kind of evil. Apparently the Old West, like the rest of human history, was just one big family. Like Waugh, again, McCarthy has forgotten that his critique of modernity is only a subset of his critique of humanity. And the problem with the present, apparently, isn't just drugs, it's also abortion, kids with green hair and the loss of good manners. McCarthy the conservative has conscripted McCarthy the artist for service in the culture wars, and the result turns out about as happily as such arrangements usually do.

Indeed, in ways that aren't true of his previous works, no matter how bloody, *No Country for Old Men* seems designed as a calculated assault on the reader. In the two interviews McCarthy has given, he has defended the violence of his works by speaking of death as the ultimate reality, the avoidance of death as a failing in both people and novels. But in his previous works, death is only part of the point, an aspect of the violent worlds he

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portrays. Here, it often seems the only point, the story a single-minded effort to pile up the body count. It is Chigurh's practice, before he kills someone, to force them to look him, to look death, in the face, and that's just what McCarthy does to us, rubbing our tender little modern liberal noses in death's horror by making us watch it in slow motion: "Chigurh shot him in the face. Everything that Wells had ever known or thought or loved drained slowly down the wall behind him." But this, and passages like it, are a sign of weakness, not strength: McCarthy needs to be this explicit and this manipulative because he has failed to make us care about his characters. There's also something sophomoric and ultimately sad in the morbid fascination he displays at moments like this. Given his age, maybe he isn't rubbing our noses in death so much as ramming his own head against it. Fiction may or may not be any country for old men, but the present never is. ■

FILMS

Neighbors

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WALL • TONY TAKITANI • RED EYE

Simone Bitton's sad, thoughtful, sometimes disturbingly beautiful documentary *Wall* might be categorized as a landscape film—the terrain in this case being Israel/Palestine, or more specifically the slash inserted between those contested place-names. This slash—which is at once symbolic, social and overwhelmingly physical—runs along Israel's so-called wall of separation, which Bitton's camera tracks in its many forms, from the Galilee down to Jerusalem, for almost the full length of her film.

What exactly is this wall? The official position is put forth in the film's only formal interview, a question-and-answer session marked by the atypical stiffness of the image and the undisguised hostility of the subject. General Amos Yaron, who is in charge of building the wall for Israel's Ministry of Defense, is shown in a head-on shot at his desk, flanked symmetrically by Israeli flags, as he declares that the wall is simply a security barrier between Israelis and their potential Arab attackers. With evident pride, he calls the project the biggest engineering job in Israel's history: a zone of barbed wire, ditches, concrete, military road and surveillance equipment some fifty meters wide, planned to run for more than 650 kilometers in length and costing $2 million a kilometer to construct. How does he define its route? Does this "seam," as he calls it, run between Israel and the Palestinians' land? General Yaron impatiently dismisses the question: "We see no difference between the sides. They're both ours." And what of the damage that the wall is so obviously doing to the land? "Any intervention causes damage," he snaps, then picks up a folder from the desk and walks offscreen.

Distributed in segments throughout the documentary, this scene with General Yaron is clearly an exception in the film's fabric. All the other definitions of the wall come from ordinary Palestinians and Israelis: people with no authority, who in some cases are seen glancingly and in others are not shown at all.

"It's a prison," says Bilal Mansour, a farmer in Qalqilya. "Without peace, it's worthless," says a nameless construction foreman from Nablus—a Palestinian, like almost all the laborers on the wall—adding, "Don't show my face, or they'll kill me." Shuli Dichter, a resident of Kibbutz Maanit, angrily relates how the wall cut off the Palestinian residents of nearby Qafia from the orchards that are their only source of income; last year, the olives simply rotted on the trees. "We Israelis have had a love affair with this land," he says, but now possessiveness has driven them to deface what they and their neighbors both love. For others in the film, though, neither love nor neighborliness enters the picture. "They shoot at Arabs from there," cheerfully explains an unseen Israeli child on the soundtrack. "No," says her friend, "the Arabs shoot at us."

While you hear these opinions, Bitton is meanwhile showing you the wall

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itself—showing it in slow, studied shots that function as her own eloquent commentary. In one scene, the lovely view of a distant town is gradually blocked, as cranes lower concrete barriers into place until they occupy the whole frame. Another scene shows the wall as porous: You look down from a hill as Palestinian workers cross at dawn to get to their jobs in Israel. Judging from the evidence before your eyes, you'd think the permeability was meant to vary. In Jerusalem, there are shots of Palestinians sneaking through, even with infants, as they carry on with their daily tasks. But in Bethlehem, Bitton shows streets that are completely depopulated, except for the religious Jews coming by tour bus to pray under armed guard at Rachel's Tomb.

Of all these views, the one that sticks in my mind as perhaps most characteristic of Bitton is the film's opening shot, which shows the wall as a work of art. From the window of a car, she records a long, long stretch of concrete that people have decorated with paintings: Matissean dancers, mazelike geometric figures, pastoral images of the sort you might find in an illustrated Bible. This shot strikes me as Bitton's confession of faith and also her self-critique. She, too, has made a work of art out of the wall. Rather than address it through an exposé or polemic, she has approached it almost as an object of contemplation, in the conviction that art is a refusal of despair. Like the wall's painters, she imposes human expression on something blank and brutal. And like those painters, she prettifies what she cannot change.

I don't say this as an accusation against Bitton, or as more of an accusation than she has implicitly leveled against herself. She has too alert a conscience, and is too good an artist, not to have questioned her art's purpose. But I happened to watch *Wall* just when such doubts deserved to be especially keen: at the moment when an influential segment of Jewish opinion was loudly crying against Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. The timing of this disengagement could not have been accidental; it came immediately after Tisha B'Av, the day on which observant Jews mourn their nation's catastrophes and the faithlessness that caused them. No other date for the withdrawal would have so inflamed the religious right. No other schedule could have allowed Ariel Sharon to disembarrass himself of Gaza, while redoubling the will of a major constituency never to give back an inch of the real prize, Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Not for the first time, I wonder why the other side's symbolic acts are so powerful and my side's so often ineffective. I also wonder why religious voices are absent from *Wall*. From a political standpoint, the film is pretty well balanced. (General Yaron can't complain that Bitton excluded his ideas; he placed them beyond belief all on his own.) But from a social standpoint, *Wall* is as lopsided as can be. It's as if Bitton could create her composed view of the landscape only by ignoring one of its strongest, most slashing forces.

I think *Wall* is a weaker picture for this omission. But I also think it's a serious and moving work of filmmaking, which asks you to look clearly and closely but without despair. If that's as much as art can do at the moment, then I will be grateful for it.

The allure and insufficiency of art also happens to be a theme of *Tony Takitani*, Jun Ichikawa's small, perfect fable of a film, based on a story by Haruki Murakami.

Born into a postwar Tokyo that still looks like a rubble dump, the title character grows up alone—his mother dead, his father always off touring with a jazz band—and takes solace in making little replicas of objects: minutely detailed drawings and sculptures that mimic precisely the look of the real thing. On the strength of this clear but limited talent, Tony develops a career as an illustrator; but he remains shut in his own world, oblivious to any emotional needs, until the day he

EVENTS

NATIONAL

Department of Peace Conference

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meets Eiko, a lovely woman who is fifteen years his junior. He falls in love with her because of the way she wears her clothes. She eventually manages to love him, too—but she also continues to love her clothes, and to Tony's dismay buys them in alarming quantity. She can't resist beauty.

In short, *Tony Takitani* is a story about appearances, and the danger of being too fond of them. It's fitting, then, that the film plays tricks on your eyes. The brilliant actor Issey Ogata (perhaps best known in the United States for his role in *Yi-Yi*) plays both Tony and his old bohemian dad. The wildly popular actress Rie Miyazawa plays both Eiko and a second woman, Hisako, who gets a chance to wear some of Eiko's clothes. This doubling makes the film's world seem smaller than it claims to be—an impression that's reinforced by the voiceover narration, which is taken up at odd moments by this or that actor on the screen, who speaks a line or two while still in character. It seems as if everyone already knows the story of *Tony Takitani*. Meanwhile, the camera is perpetually dollying to the right, so that scene after scene unfolds as if on a scroll.

A mango-sorbet movie: The flavor is subtle, exquisite and floats away as soon as you taste it.

If American movies are to remain a living culture—I'm talking about movies here, as distinct from films—then young actors must have frequent opportunities to work and develop their screen personalities, preferably under the direction of old pros who can tell a story without making a fuss. By young actors, I mean performers such as Rachel McAdams, who lit up *Wedding Crashers* with a presence that's bright, spunky but just a little troubled, or Cillian Murphy, who darkened *Batman Begins* by being creepy, threatening but just a little accident-prone. The old pros, of course, are genre guys like Wes Craven, who have fun working by the rules and deliver a whole movie experience in less than ninety minutes.

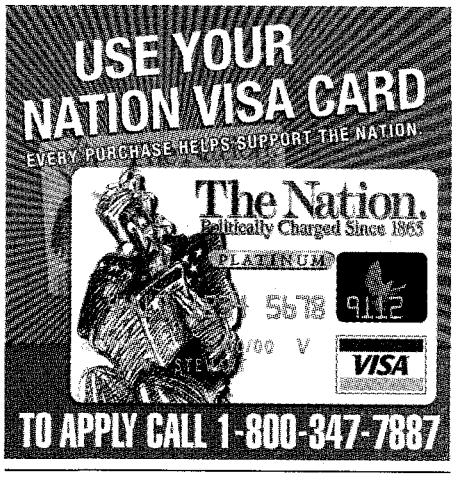
In tribute to all of the above, I rattle my popcorn box for *Red Eye*.

For McAdams, *Red Eye* is another opportunity to establish herself as the girl who looks too good to be true. In the role of Lisa, the top clerk at a fancy Miami hotel, she first seems as smoothly competent as an advanced-model pleasure android. She can field an emergency phone call, soothe a flustered colleague, direct a cabbie through a rush-hour rainstorm and keep an eye on the scheduled departure time of her airplane, all while modulating her voice to a pleasant lilt and keeping her smile framed perfectly with the loose, dark masses of her hair. At this point, only a few surface cracks appear: a slight break in her composure when someone asks how she is, a thin welt across her chest when she quickly changes outfits.

Murphy again gets to freeze you with his eyes—a pair of blue-metal weapons that he carries half-concealed—and worry you with his puckered mouth. It's so soft, so babyish, so insincere. In the role of Jackson, he first seems friendly enough, except for the iron grip he momentarily lays on a fellow's arm. But even while he's amiably chatting up Lisa, you know he's a villain, since *Red Eye* comes onto the market accurately labeled as a woman-in-peril thriller.

We can skip the plot details. You just need to know that *Red Eye* is not entirely claustrophobic—about a third of it takes place somewhere else than a turbulence-stricken airplane. Also, the writers want you to imagine that the head of Homeland Security is a benevolent family man. All right, it's a fantasy—and its main purpose is to show when, how and why the woman-in-peril changes from prey to predator.

Is the change satisfying? You bet. The filmmaking lacks the bravura invention of Craven's best films—those are *real* DreamWorks—but in its stripped-down way, *Red Eye* gleefully fulfills every requirement of the genre, while also reminding us of important truths: Men who make lots of plans need to learn to be flexible, and women who work in service jobs don't always have to smile. ■



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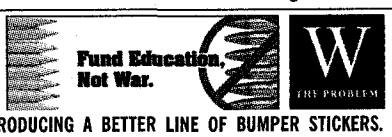

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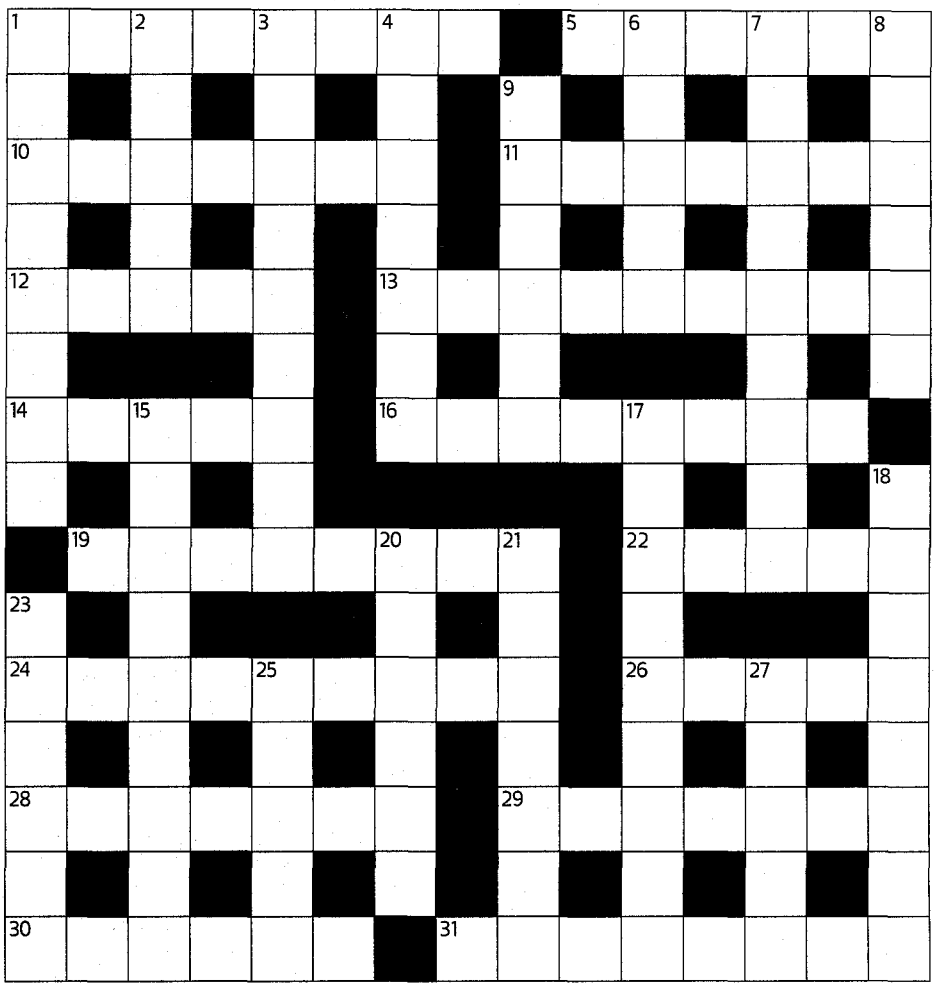

ACROSS

1 He made a place to get lost in, and when possibly dead, Saul wound up rather disturbed. (8)

5 Maids could be fit to a T, among this. (6)

10 No longer tied up, being headed for international activities. (7)

11 Where in London a spring month is bound to be rather nice. (7)

12 A broth mixture for which you wouldn't say, "It can't be beat!" (5)

13 You have to go from tongue to tongue to do it. (9)

14 In the opera, a girl is not quite the ordinary sort. (5)

16 The water barrier doesn't get exactly close, but this guy found something double-edged in suspense. (8)

19 Mountains where a body could get burned, and be seen to return. (8)

22 The lowest spot where one hears a consumer advocate could end up. (5)

24 Kotabaku used to be this, yielding a first-class return to the land of wooden shoes. (9)

26 The piece of wood I see, as one hears, is a matter of reasoning things out. (5)

28 Something resembling an ostrich could take a nip out of someone like King Mesha. (7)

29 One who painted "David," mostly—sort of nice, but missing the point. (2,5)

30 and **31** The longest day suggests those who add things up get sort of lost with what you might put in the drink. (6,8)

DOWN

1 and **23** Questioning Clarence, who eventually went to court? One would never believe such things! (8,6)

2 What's left of the fire at the end of several months. (5)

3 A shadowy description, but it suggests a pretty stupid speed for it. (9)

4 Going stag seems to have no particular calendar designation. (7)

6 A spring month the way some early people pointed out. (5)

7 What's right in the road, being less than quick with the chief? (4,5)

8 and **18** If your aim is uncertain, this might help. (A sailor has to obtain the cost of things when about to perform.) (6,8)

9 What some people do to some body is to get me up on a frisky young sheep. (6)

15 Crossed by one seeking a kingly favor, perhaps—which gets pretty big and looks good! (5,4)

17 Important meetings show the beginning of concern with the slave revolt. (9)

18 See 8

20 What belongs to Mr. Murphy spins around, obviously. (6)

21 How one talks about a nameless person! (In a couple of words, how one makes things just passable.) (2-3-2)

23 See 1

25 Did she spring Down Under to follow the rabbit? (5)

27 Spirits raised for the readers? Common knowledge has one repeated. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2999

R	E	A	G	E	N	T	S		C	A	S	H	E	W
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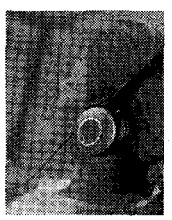

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